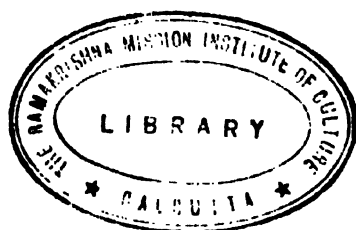


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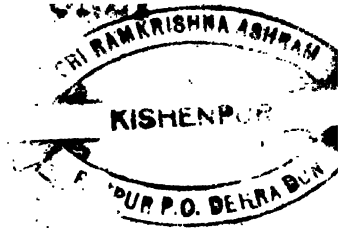
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~~Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting
strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"~~

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXV]

MAY, 1938

[No. 1

MAHASAMADHI

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing away of His Holiness Srimat Swami Vignananandaji Maharaj, the fourth President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, on Monday, the 25th of April. To the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, and to the friends and well-wishers of the Order bearing his name, this event will come as a great shock, seeing that it has taken place so soon after the demise of his worthy predecessor in the office.

The Swami was one of the very few among the surviving direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Besides being the head of the Order and the preceptor of a large number of people, he was also a good scholar and mathematician. He was the author of several books, both scientific and devotional. Among these are the English translations of Brihad-jataka, a Sanskrit work on astrology and astronomy by Varahamihira, and of devotional Sanskrit works like Naradapancharatra and Devi-bhagavata. His latest work, the English translation of Valmiki's Ramayana, is now in the press.

The Swami was the Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission from 1934, and became their President in 1937.

Om Santih ! Santih ! Santih !



WORLD UNDERSTANDING THROUGH RELIGION

[The thoughts set forth below were occasioned by the discussions held on this subject at the session of the Fellowship of Faiths held at Madras last March.]

I

MORE than at any time in the past, men to-day are paralysed by the fear of a possible world war. It is, therefore, quite natural that they should test the value of ideas and institutions by their efficacy in preventing such a catastrophe. In evaluating religion too men are seen to apply this test, and in many quarters there is evidence of a new interest in religion due to some lurking belief that it may be able to save man from the menace of war. It is perhaps due to this tendency that the Fellowships of Faiths gave predominance to the topic of 'World Understanding through Religion' in the list of subjects discussed at its last session held in Madras.

Now at a time when the leaders of men are at their wit's end in tackling this problem, and are ready in their despair to catch even a straw like the proverbial drowning man, few religious enthusiasts can withhold the impulse to come forward with extravagant promises regarding what they and their institutions can do in this difficult situation if they were given a free hand. But these, one should say, are exactly the persons who do not know wherein lies the springs of vitality in the case of religion. For to expect religion to do everything in the world except the function that is special to it, is the best way of smothering it. That, in fact, is what the story of religion as

an institution reveals to us. A time was when religious leaders and religious institutions controlled both the private and public life of men with almost dictatorial powers; but the record of history regarding their achievement in establishing peace and mutual understanding among nations and cultures provides rather disappointing reading. When the message of holiness that found expression in the lives of saints and saviours was institutionalised in churches, the first stage of degeneration began. This, however, is an unavoidable, and even necessary, step; for without at least a minimum of institutionalising, a message, however sublime, cannot find expression in this world for any considerable length of time. The process of degeneration did not, however, stop with this. For the churches, whose main function ought to have been to exemplify the ideal of holiness, got intertwined with secular interests, and in course of time began to busy themselves with everything except what they were originally meant for. It is certain that this worldly spirit entered the churches through an imperceptible process, under cover of high sounding aims like winning souls for God, establishing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, and, we may add, in modern times, of working for international amity and outlawing war.

It should not be understood from this that we are against religion and

religious institutions working hand in hand with other agencies for improving the life of man in this world itself. They ought to do that, and it is doubtful whether they would gain any social vitality without doing so. But woe unto religion and religious institutions if they make these their main purpose, and God and holiness mere secondary concerns. And this is surely going to be the final outcome if religion proves attractive to men only because of its supposed utility in achieving even such noble secular aims as eradicating poverty and abolishing war. For, religion must have holy living and realisation of God as its first concern ; all other things are subsidiary. *But it must, however, be remembered that these subsidiary effects follow inevitably if religion remains true to its main function.* For the more the number of men established in the true ideal of holiness and practising the presence of God, the greater the chances of establishing the reign of justice and righteousness in the secular life of man.

Of course these genuine men of religion, who can usefully influence secular life, must be of quite a different type from the champions of religion we come across everywhere, especially in this country. In most other countries religious institutions as a factor in politics and in the formation of political parties have practically become ineffective, and hence the evil effects of a decayed religious institutionalism is not perhaps so much felt. But we, in this country, with our political parties based on religious nomenclatures, our selection of public servants guided by the theological creeds, people nominally profess, with our electorates determin-

ed by such important considerations as whether people wear tufted or cropped hair, beards or moustaches, turbans or fez caps—we can realise very well how earth-bound institutionalism in religion can degenerate into a curse on humanity. Now men who are the products of this secularised religious spirit, and who stand for everything else but God and holiness, are not the religious types from whom anything can be expected for bettering the condition of humanity. For they are not religious men at all, being the products of a religious institutionalism that has sold itself to secular interests.

Far different from them in character and outlook is the right type of religious man whose influence can be a regenerating force in the affairs of men. The true religious man must be able to separate the spirit of religion from its institutional vestures, and embody that spirit in his own life as dynamic spirituality. While remaining true to his religious ideal, he must have the capacity to think in an absolutely disinterested fashion even when he has to arrive at decisions involving a conflict with the secular interests of his own religious group and institutions. And above all he must have the firm conviction that the main function of religion is to impart the consciousness of Divine presence to the mind of man, and that if it helps to improve the secular life, it is only as a subsidiary effect of that great value called holiness which it helps to create in the lives of men. In other words, a truly religious man is he who succeeds in de-institutionalising religion in his public life, and in converting it into an impersonal

energy of character vitalising his action from within.

If religion is to contribute anything towards world understanding, religious leaders and institutions everywhere should recognise that their main function consists in producing such characters in an ever-increasing number, and not in succumbing to the worldly spirit around them in the name of high-sounding pretensions.

II

Just as a change in the conception of the function of religion is thus necessary, there is an equal necessity for a new spirit in the relation obtaining between religions themselves, if they are to be in any way useful for bringing about world understanding. For *inter-religious* understanding will have to be secured before the voice of religion will be heard with respect by honest men. However, as conditions obtain to-day, the question is, Which of them is the greater scandal—the worldliness of religious institutions, or the bitter rivalries and antagonisms among religions?

We shall, therefore, consider now why religions quarrel among themselves, and how these quarrels can be minimised or done away with. Leaving aside the purely material considerations that lead to quarrels among religions, we find that bickerings and lack of mutual sympathy among them arise from a total misunderstanding of the nature of 'religious truth'. Hence those who want to work for inter-religious understanding should have a clear conception of the nature of religious truth. Sometimes it is said that this is only a pre-occupation of intellectuals and does not affect the life of the aver-

age man. In a sense that may be true, but in so far as intellectuals ultimately influence the life and thought of the masses, and also in so far as the average man, without a clear idea of this important point is likely to be misguided by self-seekers in the religious garb, a proper understanding of the nature of 'religious truth' is absolutely necessary for all, if religions are to be converted from social dangers into institutions for the welfare of men at large.

We generally have great faith in the wisdom of academic philosophers and learned writers, but none of them has perhaps put the nature of religious truth in so simple, beautiful and effective a form as Sri Ramakrishna, the Son of the Divine Mother, than whom there has been none in our times to contribute to harmony among religions. To quote a simple saying of his on the point: One day the Master was heard talking to the Mother of the Universe in a God-intoxicated state: "Mother, everyone says, 'My watch keeps correct time.' The Christians, the Hindus, the Mohammedans, all say, 'My religion is the true religion.' But, Mother, nobody's watch is exact. Who can truly know Thee? But, again, if one seeks Thee with a yearning heart, one can reach Thee by Thy grace through any path, through any religion."

The philosophical and mystical implications of this saying are far-reaching. Every religion is, as it were, an attempt to capture the Infinite Being in the finite meshes of human thought; for thus only can the Infinite become the object of adoration for the human mind. In this process, however, the human mind imposes its own imperfections

on that Transcendental Principle. Thus every great religion, with its own philosophy, mythology, and rituals, can be described only as an approximation to the infinite Truth of God. All of them are true in so far as they give us a glimpse of the Infinite, but none of them is, or can possibly be, a presentation of the whole of the Infinite. Moreover, the light of the Infinite, which a religion brings for the illumination of man, has naturally to pass through the prism of a particular tradition and culture. And so, in the process of transmission, it is bound to be tainted by the imperfections of its human vehicles. Thus every religion, when put to the test of abstract intellectualism, can prove itself to be nothing more than a glimpse of, and an approximation to, the Infinite God. Thus 'everyone says that his watch keeps correct time, but no one's watch can, as a matter of fact, be exact'.

So far with regard to the theoretical aspect of religious truth. From the practical point of view, everyone of the great religions can help man to reach the Highest; for in Sri Ramakrishna's words, "With true yearning for Thee, everyone of them can lead people to Thee"—not of course by virtue of their imperfections, but by the truth which they all embody. It may, however, be questioned how, if all religions have in them the taint of finitude and imperfections, they can ever lead man to the infinite and the perfect. It is in considering this question that an important point with regard to the nature of religious truth becomes evident. We find, as a matter of fact, that all the great religions of the world have produced men of the most exalted character,

who are established at the super-conscious level of experience (Sama-dhi), and in view of this fact it cannot be denied that the religions they followed, in spite of their human limitations, have the capacity to evoke in man the experience of the Highest. This fact evidently shows that religious truth is not in this respect like mathematical truth based upon measurements, nor like logical truth based upon the law of contradiction, which one may otherwise describe as the method of 'either-or'. There is nothing like 'contradictories' in religion as a way of life. In this respect, religion is a method of apprehending the highest values, and resembles aesthetics more than logic. In aesthetics, the artist employs symbols of colour, sound or thought, and with their help evokes in those who are culturally open to their stimulating influence, the experience of pure delight that passed through his own soul when he came into contact with the realm of Beauty in his moments of exaltation. These symbols work on the mind through their suggestiveness, and not by imparting information, and they depend for their effect on the attunement of the connoisseur to the culture they represent. The symbols employed may be divergent in different cultures; in the language of the logicians they may be contradictories; and for those who are culturally immune to their influence, they may be meaningless. But in spite of this, all these divergent and logically unanalysable symbols create the identical aesthetic experience in the proper type of connoisseurs.

Religions as Sadhana Sastra or way of life are more or less like this. Their philosophies, dogmas, mytho-

logies and rituals are so many symbols drawn from the intellectual and emotional life of different cultures, and charged with a power to drive a properly receptive mind above its own limitations, and ultimately help it intuit the Infinite in transcendental consciousness. As the sound symbols of music, though differing in different systems of music, help the trained connoisseurs to rise above their particularities and contact an identical realm of Beauty where they enjoy the same aesthetic delight, so also the divergent symbols of religion help their pious votaries, endowed with faith and earnestness, to transcend the limitations of their body and mind, and intuit the Absolute in whom 'Truth is Beauty and Beauty is Truth', in whom fact and value are identical—the Absolute that has been variously described as Sat-chid-ananda (Existence - Knowledge - Bliss Absolute); Santi - samriddham - amritam (abundance of peace and immortality); Param Brahma, Param Dhama, Pavitram Paramam (Power supreme, Illumination supreme, Holiness supreme). To put it briefly, once we understand the symbolical character of religious teachings and practices, we at once get over the barrier of religious contradictions, and find no difficulty in accepting the validity of all the great religions.

A wide-spread understanding of the nature of the religious truth, in the light explained above, is absolutely necessary if anything like inter-religious understanding is to be brought about, and religion made ultimately capable of contributing towards world understanding. The basic principle of this understanding is that every great religion is true in

the sense that it is an approximation to the truth of the Absolute, and that it can lead one to the Absolute if one has but an intense hankering for the Highest.

III

Before concluding we shall touch upon one more point, and that is on the place of missionary effort in this conception of religion. The conversion of unbelievers, the saving of souls in peril, the triumph of one's tribal God over those of others, and similar ideas cannot be the motive behind the right type of missionary effort; nor can force, fraud, advertisement, offering of baits, etc., be adopted as its method. What then should be the motive and method of ideal missionary effort? Firstly, in different countries of the world, there are people who have a hankering for religion, but for some reason or other—it may be sometimes scientific, sometimes social, sometimes unpleasant experiences of the past—they find dissatisfied with the religious beliefs, symbols and institutions they were habituated to from childhood. Contact with a religion and piety coming from another culture may set their dormant spirituality aflame, and a noble-minded missionary of another religion may be able to help them very much in their spiritual readjustment. Thus there may be men with Christian Samskaras or spiritual tendencies in India and China, and men with Hindu tendencies in Europe and America. The right type of missionaries can be of much help to people of this type. Secondly, with the progress in the intellectual life of communities, people often outgrow the old religious symbols, and a necessity arises for a

re-interpretation of their significance in order to revitalise them. Contact with the religious thought, experiences and piety of other cultures, especially through the best living representatives of them, will be helpful also in this work of re-interpretation and re-statement, or if one may call it so, of pouring new wine into old bottles. And, thirdly, if the missionary is a man of wider attainments, i.e., in addition to being a spiritual man he is well versed in one or more of the other branches of culture like music, painting, poetry and literature of his culture, he can also take an active part in cultural contact in a wider sense, as envisaged by Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose in his presidential address at the last session of the Indian National Congress.

Missionary work of this type, in which there is no talk of men of higher faith and lower faith, and which in a large measure comes up to the ideal pictured by Subhas Bose, is already being done by the monks of Sri Ramakrishna Order in Europe and America. Owing to their limitation in men and resources, the work has not been sufficient in volume to attract the attention of the public at large. It must also be added that it has not yet received the recognition it deserves from the leaders of thought and life in this country, and the support it requires from those who control the worldly resources in our land. But that the work is receiving ap-

preciation in the countries and communities affected by it is shown by the following facts : (1) There is a constant demand from foreign lands for more Swamis, which the authorities of the Ramakrishna Math cannot supply for want of sufficient men. (2) All the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order in foreign lands are the guests of the people there, and are mainly supported by the ladies and gentlemen interested in their work and teaching in those countries. (3) Many people in foreign lands who have been benefited by the teachings of the Swamis have shown their appreciation of India and her culture by actually co-operating with the Swamis in their work, and by contributing in terms of money for the religious and philanthropic work of the Order in India. In illustration of this may be mentioned the princely donation of 6½ lakhs of rupees by two devotees from America for the building of the Sri Ramakrishna Temple at Belur, which was consecrated a few months back.

To conclude, world understanding through religion will become possible only when religions begin to be truly religious. And it is our conviction that religions and religionists will become fit for this great work only when they have absorbed the catholic and dynamic ideal of spirituality embodied in the life and teachings of the great world teacher, Sri Ramakrishna.



CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

By A Devotee

[Swami Shivananda, otherwise known as Mahapurushji Maharaj, was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In his life-time he had travelled extensively all over India and was responsible for quickening the spiritual life of innumerable men. These conversations are pages from the diaries of his disciples, and contain many of the precious instructions imparted by him to spiritual aspirants.]

SWAMI Shivanandaji was seated in his room. Love illumined his face, and compassion flowed from his eyes. An atmosphere of deep peace prevailed in the room. It being a Saturday, some devotees from Calcutta had come to meet Mahapurushji Maharaj. Almost all of them were young men employed in different offices. Whenever they got a holiday, they came to hear the Swami and receive inspiration from his invaluable teachings. That day the conversation turned on spiritual practices.

Devotee : Maharaj, on certain days I feel joy in practising meditation and Japa (repetition of God's Name), but on certain other days I do not get any joy at all. How is it that it happens like this ?

Mahapurushji : Yes, it happens like that; on some days one enjoys it and on other days one does not relish it at all. This happens almost to every one in the initial stages. One should not, on that account, stop meditation and Japa. Did not the Master speak about the hereditary farmer ? One should apply oneself like that and earnestly pray all the while, saying: "O Lord, we are without devotion and the spirit of worship, being entangled in the world. We are weak ; we have neither

enough time nor capacity. By Thy mercy Thou must set our minds aright, so that, we can properly pray to Thee. There is none else for us except Thee. We are very weak. If Thou dost not give us the capacity, how can we pray to Thee ?" My boy, pray sincerely in this way. Pray, pray, pray to Him in a mood of supplication. And weep as you pray. Then surely He will be compassionate. Don't you know how the Master used to pray to the Mother ?—"One more day is gone, Mother ! Even now Thou hast not appeared before me!" Saying thus, he would weep, rubbing his face on the earth. With what an intense yearning Mahaprabhu Sri Gouranga also would pray ! He would weep and rub his face on the grass, saying: "O Lord, I have not yet developed a relish for Thy Name." Even like this, one has to repeat His Name with a yearning heart. His Name, my boy, is the essential thing. The heart vibrates with energy as one goes on repeating His Name. Never forget to repeat His Name and pray to Him.

Devotee : Maharaj, can we repeat His Name at all times, say, for instance, while we walk ?

Mahapurushji : Certainly. There is no question of favourable or unfavourable time for repeating the

Name of the Lord. Whenever you find time, you should repeat His Name. While walking you should mentally think of His Name, as it is not possible then either to tell the beads of a rosary or count on the joints of one's fingers without being observed by others. The Lord's Name should be repeated in secret, so that none can get an inkling of what you are doing. You should, moreover, remember Him at all times. This must be cultivated into a habit. While moving to and fro, taking food, lying down, even while engaged in all kinds of activities, remember Him constantly. There should be a constant flow of mind, as it were, towards Him—an undercurrent of His remembrance. If you practice in this way for some days, you will find that even in sleep the repetition of the Holy Name goes on without your conscious effort. The remembrance of the Lord thus becomes an inward habit.

Devotee : But the mind does not want to be steady under any circumstance. For example, one may be repeating the Holy Name : the rosary is in the hand, and His Name also is being uttered by the mouth, but one finds the mind is somehow full of diverse thoughts of other kind. Even thoughts which have never before passed through the mind would come.

Mahapurushji: Yes, this fellow of a mind is the cause of all our trouble. One has to bring this mind under control. Otherwise it will drag one this way and that way. But then, you know, this very mind comes under control with sincere effort. This very wicked mind is set right in course of time, and functions as one's spiritual guide; it takes His Holy Name in the inmost heart, leads one on the path of righteousness, and gives inspiration for right activities. One has to practise repeatedly. Pray to Him in all earnestness, and discriminate between the real and the unreal. This, my boy, is not to be achieved in a day. It is for this reason the Lord has said in the Gita, "Doubtless the mind is fickle and hard to curb, O mighty Arjuna, but by constant practice and by detachment it can be controlled." Practice, constant practice, and discrimination, are required. The Lord alone is real and permanent—this idea especially has to be held steadily before the mind.

As he spoke, the mind of the Swami was gradually becoming more and more indrawn. With steadfast eyes he was seated in silence. The devotees waited for a while ; then a few of them proceeded to the shrine room and the rest to the banks of the Ganges.

KNOWLEDGE

By Prof. Dr. Otto Strauss

[Dr. Strauss is a well-known Indologist of Germany. He was professor of Sanskrit in the Calcutta University before the Great War and subsequently in the University of Breslau. In this suggestive and illuminating article he briefly traces the concepts of Vidya and Avidya from the Brahmanas downwards, and expounds in original light their significance in the Advaita system of Sankaracharya where the concepts reach their fullest development.]

THE well-known European saying, 'Knowledge is power', contains an idea which has not been foreign to Ancient India 3000 years ago. We often read in the Brahmanas that a man 'who knows thus' (Ya evam veda) will attain his desires, i.e., earthly goods or heaven. What sort of knowledge is meant in these ancient texts, the atmosphere of which is ritualistic? It is well-known that they are not meant to teach the performance of the sacrifices, for they presuppose such knowledge and what they aim at is to expound the secret sense of these performances. It is a sort of science they develop, a pre-scientific science as a great scholar has termed it. Now a modern scientist is not satisfied to make a successful experiment; he wants to understand the moving forces which lead to the success, and he looks for the cause. In the same way, the ancient priests of our texts were not satisfied with the course of the sacrifice as such, they searched for the reason why it worked in this way, and they found the reason—to speak in a general way and without going into detail—either in some story of yore where the gods had used these rites successfully or in a hidden parallelism between microcosmos (i.e., the precinct of the ritual performance)

and macrocosmos (i.e., the universe). Those only who knew this underlying sense of the actual performance were deemed able to gain its fruit. This they meant when they spoke of success only of him 'who knows thus'. This knowledge (Vidya) differentiates the true priest from the mere performer of acts not rightly understood.

Here we are at the root of the great tree of wisdom which has not withered in the thousands of years of Indian spiritual history. It is the psychological tendency of the formula, 'he who knows thus, attains to what he desires'. The substance of the words 'thus' and 'desire' will change, i.e., it will deepen, but the direction, the inclination to look for causes, will remain. The knowledge praised as insight into the hidden meaning of the ritual is being sublimated in the Upanishads to a knowledge of bigger, of infinite range because the desire is extended from tangible goods and anthropomorphic heaven to the last and highest good beyond everything.

It is one of the great wonders in the spiritual history of mankind how the ancient teachers of the Upanishads climb to the height of the new view. They start from the inner interpretation of the sacrifice, the outward acts of which are being grasped

as symbols for inner experience, till the last cause is found, the Absolute which is Brahman, represented in man as his own self, Atman.

Thus the Upanishads are the pivot of India's spiritual history. They are prepared by the speculations of the Brahmanas; they grow out of them and supersede them by creating the leading ideas for all further thinking. And the formula as stated above, 'he who knows thus attains to what he desires', is now understood in the new sense. He who knows the secret identity of his own self with the Absolute attains to emancipation from all bonds in reaching the Absolute which is beyond description (*neti, neti*), 'from whence all speech, with the mind, turns away unable to reach it' (*yato vacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha*). This is the resulting truth, the new Vidya expressed in many ways and different shades; which have been condensed in the Brahma Sutras. On these Sankaracharya has constructed his great system of Advaita in the form of a commentary in compliance with the custom of his times instead of expounding his teachings independently. Thus it came about that according to the opinion of the best modern scholars Sankaracharya often strained the Sutras but never failed to bring out the true meaning of their common basis, i.e., of the leading ideas of the Upanishads.

The Vidya which Sankaracharya, in accordance with the best Upanishads, taught as the truth of Vedanta is of a very special kind. It is not the knowledge which is required e.g., for examination, not even the knowledge of the fact that my own self is the Absolute. In short, it is not know-

ledge in the usual sense of the word but it is the inner realization of the intellectual knowledge, its direct experience (*Anubhava*) which, changing the whole outlook of a person, puts him in such a position that no work can soil him any more, so that rebirth and retribution are cut off for ever. It is true that such subversion of life's fabric will not be attainable but to the very few. Here we see the aristocratic tendency which is patent in Indian thought from very early times, —aristocratic not in the usual social sense but in the sense of superior gifts for grasping the last truth, acquired in many succeeding births which are filled with the right conduct, the right endeavour, the right faith in the right teacher.

Now this Vidya has its counterpart in a seemingly negative conception, Avidya. But the negation is restricted to the word-formation, the conception being as a matter of fact fully positive. Thus it is said that like the word 'Amitra' being not 'not-friend' but the foe, Avidya is not 'not-knowledge'. We may translate it by 'everyday-outlook' as regards man's psychology. This view-point of the normal individual has its natural realism, and is acknowledged as such by Sankara in opposition to Buddhistic *Vijnanavada* for which the outside world is nothing but a creation of our mind. Thus he introduced the conception of a relative reality of practical significance as a lower grade to the absolute reality of Brahman, in accordance with the Upanishadic expression that the world is truth and Brahman the truth of truth (*Satyasya satyam*). With Sankara, the normal (*Vyavaharika*) soul believes through Avidya in the manifoldness of the

world, in Samsara and "Isvara, and does not grasp the Absolute but only its Maya, or to put it in the simplest way : Avidya looks on Maya, Vidya looks on Brahman. In putting things in this simple way, however, we have touched upon one of the knottiest points of Vedantic philosophy. The question how Brahman, the one without a second (Ekam Advitiyam), can have any connection with the illusion of plurality or Maya has been a painful riddle for all who desired to think out the system to the last. Sankara himself took the very wise course to let the riddle stand, declaring the relation between Brahman and Maya as indescribable (Anirvachaniya); but in the Vedanta literature of the following centuries philosophers could not abstain from looking for an intellectual solution of this central problem, and not always did they escape the danger of taking Maya which seems to be suspended between being and not-being, in a rather realistic sense, apparently under the influence of the conception of Prakriti in the Sankhya system.

Another problem connected with the knowledge which we are discussing, is its relation to works meritorious in the traditional sense. It is the logical outcome of Sankara's conception of Vidya, that any work, ritual or ethical, cannot contribute to the attainment of the only goal. The intuition, in its truest form, must spring directly from the hearing of the sacred texts which enunciate the identity of one's Self and the Absolute. This psychological process has been at the very bottom of Indian spiritual life as is shown also by ancient Buddhism where we are told, about the noble youth Yasa, that im-

mediately after hearing the Buddha's teaching, he obtained 'the pure and spotless eye of the truth', i.e., the knowledge (Mahavagga 1, 7, 6). Such immediate understanding, however, will, as already pointed out, be the share of the gifted few only. Others need a helping hand at least by meditation; but, for the many, good works had to be admitted as preparatory for the knowledge required, or they were even considered worthy to be added to knowledge on a more or less equal footing. This direction of the doctrine called Jnana-karma-samuchchaya (addition of work and knowledge) had been taught in Vedanta already before Sankara by Bhartriprapancha, and as it is natural to human nature to take the easier step, it had to be fought energetically. Thus Sankara in the 18th Prakarana of his Upadesasahasri defends his position after an exhaustive Purvapaksha by referring work to the Karma-Mimamsa and taking his ground only on the Upanishadic teaching of 'neti neti'. We may also remember that his disciple Suresvara wrote the Naishkarmyasiddhi with the sole purpose of proving the realization of liberation without regard to works.

There are different ways of finding the ultimate in spiritual research. One way consisting in ethics leads from minor to greater goodness till it reaches its culmination in the absolute Good; another way comes to the Absolute through meditation or intuition. In the latter case, the Absolute is beyond good and evil, that is to say, beyond any human standard. In Advaita Vedanta, ethics is not wanting; it is required for the conduct of life as long as there is the

relation of I and thou, that is to say, on the lower plane where there is retribution and a personal God. But Vedanta does not stop here, it has the courage to look to a sphere—and the word sphere is here, of course, only a simile because human language is not able to express it adequately—to a sphere beyond quality which is reached in life-time, rarely enough indeed. People who could attain it are called Jivanmuktas (liberated while living). There are,

however, divergences of opinion in the schools about such a possibility. But whether Jivanmukti be admitted or not, Sankara is certain that with the end of life there is the possibility for the knower 'to become' Brahman or, to speak quite to the point, 'to be what was only veiled by Maya. Then when the difference of I and thou, of subject and object has vanished, how could there be, in the ultimate unity, ethical relations ?

IDEALS OF HUMAN UNITY

By M. H. Syed, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., L.T.

[Dr. Syed belongs to the Oriental Department of the Allahabad University. The catholic ideal of human unity and brotherhood presented by him in this lucid article is the pressing need of mankind to-day, so distracted by war and persecution.]

IT is the common and well-known truths that are generally ignored and passed by, and it is the obvious, the patent and almost indisputable verity of life that is not kept in view; and so the Brotherhood of Man, although intellectually recognised by all just and thoughtful people, is yet one of those subjects that is hopelessly ignored in ordinary life. There are many people existing in this world to whom the idea of human unity has no meaning and foundation. Some of the leading men of the world, with all their culture and enlightenment, have done incalculable harm to, and brought untold suffering on, their fellow-beings by acting in a thoughtless manner and deciding the fate of the people under their charge in a way that completely disregards this deeply significant yet simple fact of our being. Religious dissensions and racial rivalries being the order of the

day, some people still doubt whether the Brotherhood of Man has any basis in reality. On the other hand there are some who believe that Brotherhood of Man is a fact in nature and in all human relations, be they social, political, economic or religious. This fact should never be lost sight of, if we wish to make steady progress and live in concord and harmony. It is necessary that such an all-important proposition should be carefully examined and its merits ascertained.

The cry, 'I am an Englishman first and Christian afterwards' or 'I am an Indian first and Hindu afterwards', is not unoften heard; but it is rare to hear man declare that he is a human being first and everything else afterwards. With all our advanced scientific ideas we are more fond of laying greater stress on the unessential fea-

tures of our lives than the essential and fundamental ones.

During the last two centuries, scientific knowledge of every description has made rapid strides, and every department of human knowledge has been thoroughly verified and systematised. Thus the finality of the verdict of science on a topic that lies within its scope, is hardly denied. It will be well if we refer this subject to it.

The physical structure of man with the exception of his outer skin, epidermis, is common to all mankind. No man has two noses or three feet or a dozen hands. Modern physiology has indisputably demonstrated that the organs of human body have common functions in all human beings, be they Africans or Indians, English or Negroes. The modern science of psychology also points to the same end and teaches that man's mind has many characteristics common to all. The three aspects of consciousness, namely, cognition, emotion and volition, are shared by all in varying degrees and according to the stage of evolution that an individual may have arrived at. All men have a tendency to think, to feel and to act. The three laws of thought of the logicians have a common bearing on all minds. The laws of development and evolution apply equally to all men, high or low, dark or white.

All human beings are subject to the same biological laws of growth, decay and death. Thus physiologically, psychologically, logically and biologically all humanity is one.

Turning to the contending schools of philosophical thought, we find that none of them have denied the solidarity of the human race. A thorough-

going agnostic, in spite of his inability to understand and explain the why and the wherefore of the material phenomena, has not so far underrated the value of social service, or disregarded the unity of man. A rationalist believes in the supremacy of reason and nothing else, and cannot, therefore, consistently disown the rational and fundamental unity of mankind. Of all the philosophical thinkers, Auguste Comte, the founder and exponent of positivist philosophy, has greatly emphasised, and even made much of, the religion of Humanity. "Humanity is our highest concept," says he, "whatever the foundation of things may be in itself, however indifferent or hostile to human progress, things may, at least up to a certain point, be compelled to enter the service of man." In England men like J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer, though never his disciples in the strict sense, were greatly influenced by him.

Men like Charles Bradlaugh and Ingersoll, who declared themselves as atheists, were in no degree anti-humanitarian; on the contrary the former always held up before himself and others a very high standard of social service. Philosophically, all those who believe in Monism or in the divinity and unity of all that lives, cannot but recognise the need for cultivating friendliness (Maitrya) towards all. Brotherhood of Man has a deep spiritual basis. Its practical realisation constitutes the first and the last word on the path of spiritual enlightenment. We might go to any highly advanced man of any Faith or creed, and we shall find him tolerant, loving and saturated with sympathy and good-will for all.

Brotherliness for all is a *sine qua non* of spiritual development according to ancient and modern mystics. Says Arthur Schopenhauer, "After all, it is only phenomenally that I differ from my neighbour. In reality, each man must say to himself with reference to other things: This art Thou. Down beneath the appearance of differences which the space and time forms give, it is the same unitary will which constitutes your life and mine; and so our interests are not different but identical."

In the last century, Joseph Mazzini, the true apostle of human liberty, the terror of principalities and powers and the champion of Republicanism, figured as a most outstanding personality and did not spare himself in proclaiming the holiness of humanity and in living up to its highest ideal. He says: "The unity of the human race could only be admitted as the consequence of the unity of God. The time has come to teach men that, as humanity is a single body, we are, all of us, as members of that body, bound to work for its development, and to make its life more harmonious, active and strong. The time is come to convince ourselves that we can only rise to God through the souls of our fellow men, and that we ought to improve and purify them even when they do not ask it of us themselves. Generally speaking you cannot, even if you would, separate your life from that of humanity; you live in it, by it, and for it."

Further he says: "Free men and slaves, you are all brothers. Origin, law and goal are one for all of you. Do not say, the language which we speak is different; tears, actions, martyrdom form a common language

for all men, and one which you all understand. Do not say, humanity is too vast, and we are too weak. God does not measure powers, but intentions. Love humanity. Ask yourselves when you do an action in the sphere of your country, or your family: If what I am doing were done by all, would it advance or injure humanity? Be apostles of this faith, apostles of the brotherhood of nations, and of the unity of the human race—a principle admitted today in theory but denied in practice." How very true and inspiring are the words of this apostle of human love and freedom! The European nations do not seem to have taken these words to their hearts or else there would have been no war.

Let us turn now to the testimony of religion. As it begins by declaring the unity of God, so it ends by proclaiming the Brotherhood of Man. In fact the two truths are inseparable, the second being implicit in the first. If there be but one life, then each form it animates, must be linked indissolubly with every other form similarly animated. All forms make but one body, of which the life is God.

"As an injury done to any organ of the body injures the whole body, so is a wrong done to one member of the body of humanity done to the whole race. None may separate himself from this intimate union; none may stand apart and seek to live alone; born into the human family, we must live in it." "Brotherhood is a fact in Nature, and from it there is no escape," says the editor of the Universal Text Book of Religions. All Religions without any exception believe in the Fatherhood of God, as

the creator and source of all beings. If that be so, then the only logical conclusion that we can draw from this faith is, that all men are equal in the sight of God. As Sri Krishna says, "The same am I to all beings; there is none hateful to me, nor dear, they who worship me with devotion they are in me and I am in them." Brotherhood of Man is only a necessary corollary of the Fatherhood of God. The source and origin of mankind is one and the same, differ as much as we may in our outer form, features and temperament. We cannot, however, deny our common origin and destiny. Some people ejaculate, "Well, whatever else religions may be, most certainly they are not brotherly." And it is unhappily true that if we look into the religious history of the immediate past, we shall find therein very little brotherhood; religious wars have been the most cruel; religious persecutions have been the most merciless; crusades, inquisitions, horrors of every kind blot with blood and tears the history of religion. We generally forget that each religion speaks one letter of the great Name of God, the One without a second. God is so great, so illimitable, that no one man, however great, no one religion, however perfect, can express His infinite perfection.

The religions of the world aim at purifying the human heart and bringing it nearer God, but people in their indifference do not study their own faiths. This is why they act against them. I dare say there is no religion in the world which has preached against the brotherhood of man, and as a proof of this statement, which might perhaps be doubted by some sceptics, I take the liberty of quot-

ing from the various scriptures of the world religions.

HINDUISM

The oldest of all the religions of the world is Hinduism. All the sacred scriptures of this ancient faith contain clear and unmistakable references to the brotherhood of man. In the 6th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita we read the following striking verses :—

"He who regards impartially lovers, friends and foes, strangers neutrals, foreigners and relatives, also the righteous and the unrighteous, he excelleth."

In the Manu Smriti we read the following :—"He who befriendeth all creatures, his name is Brahmana." "He who thus seeth the self in all beings by his own self realiseth the equality of all, and attaineth to the supreme state of Brahman."

In the third chapter of Bhagavad Gita, we read the following:—"Having an eye to the welfare of the world also, thou shouldst perform action (III:20)". "I, O Conqueror of Sleep, am the self seated in the heart of all beings." There are many other such Slokas.

In Katha Upanishad (V. 10) we come across the following:—"Thus one universal Inner Self of all beings becometh one separate individual self for each form."

Again in the Isha Upanishad we read:—"He who seeth all beings in the self and the self in all beings, he hateth no more."

In the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata the following verse is most significant :—"He who is the friend of all beings; he who is intent on the welfare of all with act and thought

and speech—he only knoweth religions.”

In Vishnu Purana we read:—
“Knowing the Supreme to be in all beings, the wise extend love to all creatures undeviatingly.”

ZOROASTRIANISM

In the order of historic sequence, the next religion given to the world is Zoroastrianism. We read the following in the Patet Pashemani:—“If I have committed any sin against the law of brotherhood in relation to my father, mother, sister, brother, mate or children, in relation to my leader, my next-of-kin and acquaintances, my own townsmen and my servants, then I repent, and pray for pardon.”

BUDDHISM

Buddhists, in the Dhammapada, are taught the following:—“Let us live happily then, not hating those who hate us; among men who hate us let us dwell free from hatred.”

In the Mettasutta, 7, 8, we read:—
“And let him (every one) cultivate good-will towards all the world, a boundless (friendly) mind, above, below and across, unobstructed, without hatred and without enmity.”

CHRISTIANITY

“One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.” (Math., XXIII, 8.)

“God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.” (Act XVII, 24, 26, 29.) “We are the offspring of God.” (Galatians, III, 28.)

In Colossians, iii, II, we read the following:—There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for

ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Ephesians, IV, 4: “Peace be to the brethren.”

St. John, Ch. XVII, 21-23: “That they all may be one: as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.”

Corinthians, VIII, ii, 12: “Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? but when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.”

John, IV, 7; II, 20, 21: “Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another . . . He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him: That He who loveth God loveth his brother also.”

ISLAM

The Holy Koran teaches: “To your parents show kindness, and to kindred, and orphans, and the poor, and the neighbour who is a kin and the neighbour who is a stranger and the companion who is stranger and the son of the road and what your right hand possesses (slaves). As for the orphan oppress him not; and as for the beggar, drive him not away.”

The sayings of Mohammed: “No man is a true believer, unless he desireth for his brother that which he desireth for himself.” “He who is not affectionate to God’s creatures and to his own children, God will not be affectionate to him.” “Who is

the most favoured of God? He from whom the greatest good cometh to His creatures." "The best of men is he from whom good accrueth to humanity. All God's creatures are his family; and he is most beloved of God who trieth to do most good to God's creatures." "Feed the hungry and visit the sick, and free the captive if he be unjustly confined. Assist any person oppressed, whether he be Muslim or non-Muslim. God enjoins you to treat women well, for they are your mothers, daughters and aunts. Do you love your Creator? Love your fellow-men first."

Says the Koran: "O you who believe, let not one people or nation scoff or laugh at another people or nation, perchance they may be better (in the eyes of God, i.e., possess greater potentialities of doing good), than the scoffers."

The Prophet of Islam said during his last pilgrimage, "Remember, you are all brothers. All men are equal in the eyes of God. And your homes, your lives and your properties are all sacred and in no case should you attack each other's life and property. To-day I trample under my feet all distinctions of caste, colour and nationality. All men are sons of Adam, and Adam was of dust."

The great Khalifa Omar renewed this charter in the following words: "I will make no invidious distinction between the red and the black, between Arabs and non-Arabs, and will follow the footsteps of the Holy Prophet."

Again the Holy Koran says: "And do not find fault with your own people nor call one another by nicknames; evil is a bad name after (you have joined the brotherhood of Islam)."

From these quotations it is abundantly clear that none of the great religions of the world ever taught anything anti-humanitarian or encouraged intolerance or persecution.

The followers of a religion and not the religion itself are to be blamed for any offence they may have committed against their brother men. At times the noble truths of religion were misunderstood and perverted and this gave rise to dissension and quarrel among the faithful.

If the common ideal of human unity is universally recognised and accepted by all the civilised nations of the world, they would try to extend a helping hand to those of their fellow-nations which are weaker, less equipped, less fortunate and more backward than their own, in the name of humanity, good-will and fellow-feeling. They would not, then, be actuated by any racial feeling, nor would they be guided by the time-worn and almost primitive consideration of the so-called national prestige, power and glory; but they would be mostly influenced by higher and more lofty ideals of human unity, and consider it a privilege rather than pride and false glory to uphold the cause of truth and justice, and stand by those peoples who are in distress or in a fallen condition.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CULT OF BHAKTI IN HINDUISM

By Prof. Jadunath Sinha, M.A., P.R.S., Ph.D.

[This forms the first of a series of self-contained articles by Dr. Sinha, Professor of Philosophy, Meerut College, on the Bhakti cult in India.]

THE Bhagavata religion is the religion of devotion and love. It is a monotheistic religion. It believes in one God as the Supreme Person (Purushottama). It does not look upon the ultimate reality as an impersonal Being or Brahman devoid of all qualities, but as the Supreme Person endowed with moral qualities, and with whom we hold communion. It believes in the distinction between the finite soul and God, at least for practical purposes of prayer, worship, and religious communion. It lays stress on the blissful character of God. God is pre-eminently the God of love. The finite soul can know Him and realise Him only through faith and devotion. Knowledge, concentration of mind (Yoga), penances, and moral actions are subsidiary to faith and devotion. They only purify the mind and incline it towards God. Without faith in God they are of no avail. Bhakti is the only means for the realisation of God. He reveals Himself to the devotee who offers his whole-hearted devotion to Him, and fills him with His presence.¹ God can be known only through His grace. No human attainments, physical, intellectual, moral, or spiritual, are adequate to the comprehension of God. No human achievement can compel the grace of God. Repentance for sins (Anutapa), humility of spirit (Dainya), complete self-

surrender to God (Atmanivedana), absolute resignation to God (Prapatti), looking up to Him as the only support of life (Saranagati), living for Him and Him alone (Tadarthapranasthana), and loving Him as our very own, the nearest and the dearest (Prestha), these are necessary for the realisation of God. These are the main tenets of the Bhagavata religion.

The cult of Bhakti is an indigenous growth in Hinduism. Its germs are found in the Vedic hymns. "It is impossible to read some of the soul-stirring Vedic hymns to Varuna, Savitr and Ushas, and not to feel therein the presence of true 'Bhakti,' however inadequate may have been its philosophical background."² "Varuna is mainly lauded", says Macdonell, "as upholder of physical and moral order. Varuna is gracious to the penitent. There is no hymn to Varuna, in which the prayer for forgiveness of guilt does not occur. Varuna is on a footing of friendship with his worshipper, who communes with him in his celestial abode, and sometimes sees him with the mental eye."³

The following hymns to Varuna will amply bear out the truth of the statement :

¹ Belvalkar and Ranade : *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, pages 409.

² *A Vedic Reader*, pp. 134-35.

³ *Narada Sutras*, 79-80.

I

"Varuna, hear this call of mine :
be gracious unto us this day:
Longing for help I cried to thee.

Thou, O wise god, art lord of all,
thou art the king of earth and
heaven :

Hear, as thou goest in the way.

Release us from the upper bond,
untie the bond between, and
loose

The bonds below, that I may live."⁴

II

"May we be in thy keeping, O thou
leader, wide-ruling Varuna,
lord of many heroes,

O sons of Aditi, for ever faithful,
pardon us, gods, admit us to
your friendship."⁵

III

"If we, as gamblers cheat at play,
have cheated, done wrong un-
wittingly or sinned of purpose,
Cast all these sins away like loos-
ened fetters, and Varuna, let
us be thine own beloved."⁶

The cult of Bhakti or single-minded devotion to God, adumbrated in the the Vedas, clearly comes out in the later Upanishads. They unequivocally declare that Brahman is the ultimate reality (Sat), consciousness (Cit) and bliss (Ananda)⁷. It is of the nature of bliss (Rasa) which transcends pleasure and happiness. Finite creatures enjoy only particles of the infinite bliss of Brahman.⁸ Brahman is made of the quintessence of bliss. Finite creatures become happy only by partaking in the divine

bliss which is the core of their life. Bliss is the soul of life. Who would live if he were not sustained by the vitalising force of the infinite bliss of Brahman.⁹ It is Brahman which gives us life and joy. Brahman is identical with Atman. Atman is dearer than sons, dearer than wealth, dearer than all other things.¹⁰ The husband is not dear for his own sake but for the sake of the Atman which is in him. The wife is not dear for her own sake but for the sake of the Atman which is in her. The sons are not dear for their own sake but for the sake of the Atman which is in them. Wealth is not dear for its own sake but for the sake of the Atman which is in it.¹¹ Things and persons are dear, not in themselves apart from the Atman, but as imperfect expressions of the Atman which is the soul of our souls, and dearest to us all.

The word 'Bhakti' occurs for the first time in the Upanishads in the Svetasvatara Upanishad. The following texts from this Upanishad clearly bring out the cult of Bhakti propounded by it : The spiritual secret should be imparted to him only who has absolute faith (Bhakti) in God as in the Master (Guru)¹². By meditation on, and communion with, God, the ignorance of God is dispelled.¹³ The doctrine of grace is emphasised by the Svetasvatara Upanishad. Man, when favoured by God, attains freedom from death.¹⁴ God helps him in the attainment of spiri-

⁴ *An Account of the Vedas*, 1892, p. 76.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁷ *Nrisimhapurvatapani Upanishad*, 1.7.

⁸ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 4.3.22.

⁹ *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2.7.

¹⁰ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 1.4.8

¹¹ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 2.4.5.

¹² *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, vi. 23.

¹³ *Ibid.*, i. 10.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 6.

tual knowledge and fruition of ascetic practices.¹⁵ Self-control and meditation depend upon the grace of God.¹⁶ The attainment of spiritual bliss also depends upon Him.¹⁷ By the grace of God, the Creator, one can see the Lord.¹⁸ The Kathopanishad and the Mundakopanishad also emphatically declare that the Atman cannot be realised by the study of the Vedas, nor by intelligence, nor by deep learning; it can be realised by him only whom it chooses or favours;

to him the Atman reveals its own nature.¹⁹ The Svetasvatara Upanishad gives us also the message of Prapatti or absolute self-surrender to God. Verily, as a seeker after liberation, I take refuge in that luminous Being only who is the illuminator of spiritual understanding.²⁰ Thus the germ of the cult of Bhakti are found in the Vedic hymns, which grow and develop in the Upanishads and blossom forth fully in the Epics and the later devotional literature.

PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL STRIVING

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, formerly Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is at present teaching the principles of Vedanta in different countries of Central Europe, with Switzerland as his headquarters. The following are the notes of his class talks at Wiesbaden, Germany, on the basis of the book 'Spiritual Teaching of Swami Brahmananda.' We are glad to announce that instalments of these talks will be a regular feature of the *Vedanta Kesari* for some time.]

THOSE who are not spiritually minded while they live in the world, can never be spiritually minded when they retire from the world. Unless we have sown the seed of spiritual life in our soul in early life itself, there is no possibility of creating the spiritual instinct in later life.

One has to begin with one's spiritual life as early as possible, whatever the worldly-minded may say. The cleverness of all such worldly minded critics is just like that of the crow. It thinks itself very clever and worldly-wise, but it eats filth and dirt all the same. Worldly people always tell you that there is plenty of time for you to take up spiritual life. First

enjoy your youth, and then, in old age, there will be time enough to do devotional practices and lead a spiritual life. But what will happen if this advice is followed? When you grow old, you will find that the old impressions have become so deep that there is no possibility of effacing them, that you have become the slave of your impulses and instincts, and can no longer act in the way you would like to. You will find it impossible to lead a higher and purer life, either mentally or physically. Our ideal must, therefore, be to make a beginning for the attainment of liberation in this very life, and to make the best use of the time that is given us.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, i. 16.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, ii. 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, iii. 12.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, iii. 20.

¹⁹ *Katha Upanishad*, ii. 23, *Mundaka Upanishad*, iii.23.

²⁰ *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, vi. 18.

Purity is the condition of Divine grace. Without purity and real dispassion there can never be any spiritual life, or any deep spiritual striving even. The grace of the Divine comes to a person in the form of self-effort, in the form of the will to strive for something higher and more permanent than all these phenomena. There are so many people in this world who do not care for spiritual life; so the very hankering for spiritual life in one, is really due to the grace of the Divine.

Some speak of destiny, others speak of self-effort, while others again hold, "Yes, it is true that everything depends on the will of the Lord, but the Lord desires that I should strive my utmost. Self-effort comes to me as a manifestation of my 'destiny'. It is the will of the Lord that creates in me the desire for striving".

In actual spiritual life we find that unless we strive our utmost and our best, the Lord's grace will not descend on us.

We must know how to divide the mind to some extent. The mind has such wonderful powers, and we can make one part of it cling to the Lord and to the Lord alone, whatever be our occupation. This in itself is a great Sadhana. What is most essential in all forms of spiritual life is to keep the greater part of the mind

thinking of God, thinking of the Ideal, without allowing it to give itself to thoughts of the world, or of worldly affections and relations, even when occupied with some worldly duty.

Through constant and unflagging practice we may develop an attitude of mind that enables us to think and to feel that whatever we do is a service to the Lord, and that we have no right to the fruits of any of our actions. "O Lord, whatever works I do, I look upon it as a form of worship offered to Thee. This service may be physical, intellectual or spiritual.

It is quite true that all are the Divine, but it is better to salute some of these manifestations from a safe distance. There are some forms of the Divine that you should avoid, and others again that you should not approach too closely, during the time of your Sadhana. Always be on your guard, and be wide-awake. Always watch the reactions in your mind brought about by certain people and things, and let your relations with them be guided by these reactions. Avoid everything that is apt to rouse old impressions and thoughts belonging to your former life. If you do not, you cannot attain mental purification.



BUDDHIST IDEAL OF SPIRITUALITY

By Bhikshu Jnanapriya

[Rev. Jnanapriya is a German Buddhist monk. His presentation of the Buddhist spiritual ideal, mainly as depicted by the Mahayana School, reveals the very close affinity of this phase of Buddhism to Vedanta.]

WHILE the Southern or Hinayana Buddhism regards Mahayana as a corruption of the original Buddhism or at best a false and decadent branch, the Northern School of the Mahayana considers the Hinayana in turn as incomplete—as true, no doubt, as far as it goes but not going far enough. To a very large extent Hinayana is taken up with subtle word-teaching, and consequently it is only an intellectual and 'ethico-philosophical system' teaching only self-salvation. Such a cold, lifeless philosophy or set of doctrines, they would contend, has darkened all light of intuition, Bodhi or Prajna. Whatever justification there is for this criticism, arises from the negative asceticism of Hinayana which cuts off the adherents of that school from the world, and smothered Buddha's spiritual dynamism and contagious energy with its own unimaginative pedantry.

It seems hardly justifiable to use even the word 'spirituality' in connection with the Southern School of Buddhism. At least the writer knows followers of that School who object to the use of it. For the traditional Southern Buddhism is essentially analytic, and to this extent it is somewhat materialistic and mechanical. The analogy of the nineteenth century pseudo-scientist who tried to discredit spirit by defining it as 'a gaseous vertebrate'

(Haeckel), is to the point here. The Hinayana, too, endeavours simply by analytic meditation and a bit of experimental psychology to understand moving life by breaking it into dead bits and pieces. But to the discriminating intellect, disintegrating analysis dealing with the superficial, external aspect of life, is death. Such a process of analysis operates destructively, if the synthetic, unifying and positive method of meditation is rejected with horror. To be in tune with the antiquated and exploded notions of the flat Western materialism with its senseless atheism, and to be monstrously disgusted with all spirituality and true religion, form an attitude that is fatally destructive and sterile. It is like Goethe's 'ghost of negation, the father of all hindrances.'

What then is Buddha's ideal of dynamic spirituality? He did not give a system of thought, but a way of life and practice, of mind-control and self-culture, based upon what are known as the Four Noble Truths and the Golden Path that leads unerringly to Enlightenment and perfect Self-realization inherent in every one of us. It is the definite Path of confidence, steady self-restraint, aspiration and discipline, which all the Buddhas and ancient Rishis had followed. The last, again, in its triple form, consists of Sila, Dhyana and Prajna.

The Spiritual Path, we may say, is the sublimation and transformation of our restless savage tendencies. It is thorny, precipitous and keen like the edge of a razor; nevertheless this arduous path has been trodden by men of strong determination, undaunted spirit and indomitable energy. One must have a firm resolve to realise it. When once you make up your mind to tread the path, everything becomes smooth and easy and the whole spiritual world will back you up.

In conformity with nature, the way of life and spiritual practice differs for different individuals according to their varying capacity, temperament and taste; yet the destination and goal of all is the same. It is an unfolding experience, a purifying process. It is inherent in the nature of Ultimate Reality itself called Mind-essence or Void. Thus one rises to spiritual levels beyond the limits of intellectuality and ultimately attains a blissful harmony and identity of one's life with all life: "Tat tvam asi!" Confidence and conviction are based on an actual becoming and awakening that comes by practising concentration and meditation with an ever increasing awareness. Absolute certitude can only come from a direct, intuitive self-realisation of the perfect Oneness of the totality of all beings in their essential Reality, i.e., Mind-essence or All-inclusive Consciousness. The fundamental characteristic of spiritual life is seen to lie in its unitive nature.

The basis and principal teaching of Buddha's Noble Path is that all definitive things, phenomena and ideas are subjective and unreal, being infinitely varied manifestations and

appearances of one's own mind (Cf. Dhammapada). Even the highest conceptions are wholly mind-made and 'void'. They are terms of relation, not of Reality. For a concept (even the concept of Karma or Anatta), is a form and a part of Samsara, and as such is subject to the same conditions as all other forms having no self-nature of their own. People, grasping their own shadows without discrimination, become attached to them; and clinging to dualism, they never attain tranquillity.

The sole Reality, we can conceive, is an ultimate Essence of Mind or the one undivided Existence, free from all change and all duality. Universal Mind, in its essential nature all-pervading and immaculate as a deep mountain lake, pure and unruffled, is intrinsically clear; its face is eternally unclouded by Karmic defilements. That is, it is not directly the source of things and phenomena, and is free from all individuation; it is for ever serene and eternal; yet it is working in all things to uplift and lead them to the peaceful Bliss and exalted state of Buddhahood and Nirvana, and thereby causing the process of evolution from behind the scene. Universal or Divine Mind and Nirvana are One, and this life-and-death world and Nirvana are not to be separated. Worlds and oceans evaporate in Eternity! And this world of entrancing sound and colour, of dance and vibration, is a tiny bubble in the Eternal Silence of the Infinite; it rises out of the darkness, laughs in the glimmering light, and disappears. It is like seeing phantoms coming and going, as it were, upon the surface of a mirror or like hearing an echo in the valley. When the

unenlightened mind of sentient beings, which in its inmost, essential nature is absolutely pure and clear, is stirred and defiled by the winds of delusion—Maya or relativity—the dancing of the waves and bubbles of mentation and discriminative disturbances make their appearance. Any form regarded as in itself superior to, or existing independently of, its parent Mind as 'Atta', is a menace to that mind's enlightenment. When vain ignorance and self-illusion are removed, and the mind is for ever quieted, the multiplicities of separate things disappear. The higher Mind, restored to its original brightness (Prajna), realises its identity with Noble Wisdom and purest Mind-essence, which is the seed or kernel of enlightenment.

Before one can attain Enlightenment and Buddhahood, which is the spiritual perfection of the highest order, the genuine aspirant must steadily cleanse and emancipate his mind from all discriminations of ideas, thoughts and desires. The essence of spiritual practice and soul-growth is to thoroughly purify the intuitional mind and to remove from it all illusions that hide Ultimate Truth and Reality. If this is achieved, all on a sudden the recognition of the Oneness of all things in their essential reality flashes up, and Samsara becomes Nirvana. The attainment of Buddhahood is not by dependence on words and letters, nor through transmission from outside by scriptures. It is by looking deep into one's nature, and by the manifestation of the Divine immanent in man.

To find this new point of view which is imperative for Moksha, we have to develop and use a faculty of cognition which is higher than mind and

intellect. As Bergson pointed out to the people of the West last century, the power of the discursive understanding is strictly limited and only relational. It has been evolved by life for practical purposes, but unfortunately we have at the same time darkened the light of intuition. This 'something higher' is the deeper, intuitive faculty of Prajna, Bodhi or Vidya, the highest spiritual power inherent in our own nature. This splendid pillar supports the grand edifice of the whole of Buddhism. Hard and sharp like diamond it will cut away all arbitrary conceptions and bring one to the other shore of enlightenment. When this principally spiritual faculty begins to blossom and to radiate in the bliss of Samadhi, Sunyata or the Void of things (nothing), equivalent to the One without a second, is understood; and from that understanding rises Karuna, all-embracing loving kindness and compassion in the supreme Unity of Buddhahood. Prajna, marking the crowning height of the spiritual practice and discipline, is the Ultimate Principle of unified Wisdom and Love overflowing the whole creation; it gives self-realisation through identification. "You must penetrate into your own true nature and listen in noble silence, for this nature is the Buddha Himself" (Bodhi-dharma). Infinite and indomitable strength is within! Open your eyes; your native Light shines clearly forth, and you see things 'as they really are.'

Accordingly, we must really live the true Buddha-life; for only thus can we understand the unitive life of Buddhahood and the wonderful secret of Existence embracing all things; otherwise we can have no real know-

ledge of, and confidence, in it. Reality cannot be entered into by mere bookish statements concerning it. The ingenious spirit of Buddha cannot be transmitted verbally, it must be directly and personally experienced by each one of us in his inmost soul. Never but by the daily application of it as a mental principle, by making it part of our very being, is it truly understood. It is solely the practical side that is the human side everywhere: it is earnest practice and discipline, not theory or school that counts in life; and the touchstone of living faith and philosophy is, after all, action. The Dharma must really educate and develop the whole man, his heart and hand as well as his intuitive power. Such an ideal of perfection will not at all produce lazy, dreamy souls and otherwise quietists who are out of touch with life, and who shrink from life's responsibilities. The Blessed One Himself was indeed the most energetic person imaginable. His personal experience under the sacred Bodhi-tree will directly take one to the radiant peak of spiritual attainment possible for man. The veil of the finite mind will then open and the little ego will melt into nothingness, and there takes place the revelation of Truth in the great silence, the blissful peace and harmony of the Infinite.

Peace and joy have always been most considerably emphasized in India. They are the twin distinctive characteristics of true, inner spiritual life. Buddhism, without Enlightenment and Bliss, is like the glorious sun without light and heat. If the aspirant is put in tune with the All-Perfect Infinite, and the new point of

view is acquired, the tone of one's life is thereafter changed. The false ugliness of life is transformed into the real beauty of a universal harmony and peace. Many saints and humble God-men who diffuse light and joy like the self-luminous sun, have described the highest states of spirituality from their profound experiences. The mind of these true Supermen is one with the heart of Universal Life, with the 'pulsings of eternity', and death can no more overcome them. No wonder, they liked to live in the hush of the jungles and lonely mountains and by the lakeside. In close and intimate touch with Nature, the soul seems to break the limits of personality and to grow in tempered strength and sweetness. It takes wings and soars to the heights of Nirvana, blissfully peaceful with the serenity of perfect love and compassion for all.

Now let us look at the landscape before us. The trees, the hills, the sea, the golden clouds, they are our brothers with whom we are intimate as with ourselves, like the air and the mote dancing in the sun-light. Everything can teach us. Observe how the sea is approaching us! So fearless and quiet! It moves involuntarily and naturally, unconscious of movement, so purely, 'because so it must be.' Let your life flow of itself, as the sea heaves, as a flower blooms, in the unabating, simple beauty of Tao, the One illuminating all creations and working constantly and eternally in all things to raise them to higher and higher levels of life. All spiritual practice is the evolutionary urge of this principle from within, for attaining greater and greater perfection. Let us return to our 'own home,' to

the purity and simplicity of the original source whence we came ! Out of the silence we come, and to it we return. Those who know it, tell it not, those who tell it, know it not.

BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

By Louis Hector

[Mr. Louis Hector of Williams College, Massachusetts gives herein a comparative study of Buddhism and Christianity, which is very suggestive.]

THE comparison of two great religions which have existed for many centuries and have been held by millions of believers, is a peculiarly difficult task. When one compares two philosophies, he is comparing two intellectual systems. It is relatively easy to point out the points of agreement and of conflict. A philosophy, moreover, is contained in a book or a group of books written for the express purpose of describing a definite body of beliefs. Philosophies are thus so explicit and so similar in form, that they can be almost written down in parallel columns, and checked one against the other. Religions, however, are a very different sort of thing. A great religion is more than a body of teachings ; it is more than a set of beliefs or a set of ritualistic practices. It is a peculiarly organic thing including a great number of individuals, many beliefs of a varying character, many organisations and rituals. It extends over many centuries and suffers a multitude of changes. It includes schisms, heresies, and many factional disputes. If one looked, for instance, at a great variety of Christians, and compared their actions and beliefs, he might be tempted to say that they had nothing in common but a name. Buddhism is also just as varied and as diversified. One is struck by the fact that St. Francis seems much closer to Buddhism than to the Christianity of St. Augustine or of Calvin ; Jacopone da Todi and St. Theresa are closer to the Chan sect than they are to St. Ambrose or St. Gregory. Santi-Deva, on the other hand, is a man of emotional fervour and spiritual struggle much closer to Augustine than to Gotama. Indeed, the most fascinating thing about the study of Buddhism is the observance of the many religious types and their similarity to the many types of Christians. In spite of this wide-spread diversity within the great religions, however, there is a unity which can be observed in each of them ; there are certain fundamental characteristics which tend to remain the same among the multitude of variations. A comparison of some of these characteristics will show that there are differences between Buddhism and Christianity as well as similarities.

Perhaps the most striking difference between Christianity and Buddhism is in the authority of their doctrines. Jesus was a good Jew and believed in the old Hebrew religion. He respected the authority and the prophecy of the Old Testament figures. If he seems at times to have disobeyed the letter of the Law, it was only that he might be more loyal to the spirit of the Law. He quoted a great deal from the Old Testament to prove his points. His

own doctrines were divinely inspired because he was the Messiah. Jesus does not seem to have considered his teachings as anything more than the culmination of Judaism. God had revealed his word to Moses in the Law, and to the prophets in their inspired revelations. Jesus seems to have felt that he had at last come to fulfill the prophecies, and to bring the final message of God. His teaching was not dogmatic in the sense that it was formalistic and hide-bound by all traditions. It was essentially, however, a teaching that had to be accepted because God had ordained that this was the way one must act if he wished to gain the Kingdom of Heaven. As soon as the church began to grow, Christianity came to rest more and more on authority. In the third century, Tertullian and Cyprian made it plain that the bishops have the final authority in all doctrinal questions, and that heresy was a terrible sin. There was little appeal to argument or reason; truth was found in the Bible and its inspired interpretation by the bishops. Tertullian's '*Credo quia absurdum*' is about as far from Buddhism as anything could be. When the church became a part of the Roman imperial system, this dogmatic, authoritative control over beliefs became even stronger. Councils were called to settle, once and for all, subtle theological problems. Buddhism also had its councils, but these were chiefly for the purpose of correctly setting down the teachings of Gotama by comparing the various statements handed down by memory. There was nothing in Buddhism like the nasty fight over the nature of Christ at Nicaea. The Reformation really brought small change. It simply substituted individual interpretation for

church interpretation. The Bible was still the holy book, the word of God which was undeniably true, and instead of one dogmatic interpretation there came to be many interpretations, each of which claimed to be the sole truth.

Buddhism, on the other hand, rests on reason. "Do not accept a statement on the ground that it is found in our books, nor on the supposition that 'this is acceptable', nor because it is in accord with your belief, nor because it is the saying of your teacher." This is almost unbelievable to us Westerners. Even the scientist of to-day, who is so insistent upon rationality and demonstration, does not make such an appeal to the rational faculties if one discusses the hypothetical, conventional elements of his science. Buddha felt that he had the truth, but he seems to have realised that this truth would be valueless to his disciples unless they themselves had reasoned it out. This is the glorious faith of our own Western Liberalism in its highest form—that man will recognise the truth when it is reasonably demonstrated to him, and then accept it; and that a doctrine, even if true, becomes a dogma when it is forced upon a man who does not see its rational character. It is true that Buddhism contains traditional elements. The idea of Karma, of transmigration, and of a rigidly just universe are accepted from Hinduism without question. On the basis of these beliefs, however, Gotama erected a teaching that is based on psychological observation of the springs of human suffering. It should be noted also that the Buddhist teachings retain all their validity if these doctrines are discarded. The state of Nirvana becomes a state of tranquill-

ity and peace of mind desirable in this life, even if we forget all about Karma and rebirth.

It is instructive, also, to compare Buddhist sects with Christian sects. The latter always seem to be based on various dogmas that arise from different interpretations of the Bible. The sects are conscious of the truth of their own theological tenets and the falsity of the doctrines of other sects. The Buddhist sects, particularly in China and Japan, where they exist in great number, seem to be based on a different sort of distinction. These sects emphasize the different ways of worshipping. Thus the 'Pure Land' sects emphasize Bhakti, worship or fervent adoration of Amitabha (Amito); the Chan or Zen direct mystical communion with the Buddha nature; the Tien Tai, philosophical meditation. Doubtless, each sect considers its particular method of worship slightly superior in efficacy to all the others. This does not involve, however, the black and white, true or false tendency of Christian sects. There is a great difference in thinking that your neighbour is worshipping the same thing in a slightly inferior manner, and in thinking that he is quite wrong in his beliefs. It is true that Protestantism has been tending toward the former of these concepts in recent times. Such a move as that of John D. Rockefeller Jr., to bring together the churches into a common Christian body, is one of a number of attempts to gain that freedom of intercourse and benevolence which Buddhism seems to have so successfully preserved.

There are hundreds of similarities that might be noted, and contrasts that might be drawn in this comparison. The doctrine of love, the peda-

gogical methods, mysticism, the idea of God as compared to the eternal Buddha, the limited Jewish cosmology with a *denouement* soon to arrive, as compared to the seemingly limitless Buddhist conception of the universe—all these would be fruitful subjects. In this short paper, however, I should like to consider, perhaps only suggest, a problem which is less definite than these, but to me very important. The Buddhist seems to be engaged chiefly in saving himself from the suffering of the chain of Karma. He is interested in freeing himself from the pains of existence which arise through desires and passions. The Buddhist works for peace by the annihilation of all attachment to worldly things. One even feels sometimes that the Buddhist advocates love for the calming effect it has on the lover. All this springs from Gotama's fundamental intellectualism. There is a desired state, and psychological observation tells what will produce that state. I do not mean to condemn Buddhism. This calm passivity and this love, so unattached to objects as to be almost unearthly, are tremendously inspiring. In Mahayana Buddhism and Christianity, however, there is an added emotional element. Santi-Deva and St. Paul have a tremendous desire, an almost physical hunger, for grace and religious experiences. In the Mahayana, moreover, one finds the idea of storing up merit for others, of saving the world. There is a sense of activity here. It is like Christ driving the money-changers from the temple. In Christianity one finds statements such as St. Theresa made about her mystical visions. "This is the end of that spiritual union, that there may be born of its works, works." In some

Christians, like St. John, love itself and the mystical union with Christ are the great goods. But I have never found a Christian with the complete calm of Buddha. We Westerners, who have felt the force of Goethe's thought, sometimes, are a little suspicious of this calm without any struggle or desire, of this complete at-homeness in the universe. We have a few phrases such as 'the peace of God that passeth understanding',

but most Christianity has a strong dynamic element. The beauty and final moral nature of Gotama, however, allay the suspicions of those who study him. It is not for us to pass judgment on the value of these elements. It would seem to me, however, that for most of us, who are neither Faust nor Gotama, each has a validity and an uplifting message which can help us in the conduct of our lives.

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THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

SUTRAS 13 TO 15.

अन्यथा पातित्यशङ्कया ॥ १३ ॥

अन्यथा otherwise पातित्यशङ्कया as there is risk of a fall.

13. As otherwise there is risk¹ of a fall.

Notes. 1. *Risk of a fall*—The case that is being considered is that of a man whose realisation has become well established. Therefore, there can be no risk for him. He can never have a fall. Realisation once gained and fully established can never be lost. Nor need he be afraid of becoming vicious or wicked in life ; for all his propensities for wickedness and vice have vanished with his ego and selfishness, before his realisation. In fact, it is the conduct of a realised man that sets the standard of Dharma. The realised man is, however, more anxious about the risk of a fall for others who are likely to imitate him and follow in his footsteps. He will,

therefore, be very scrupulous in setting an example to others, lest they should have a fall. His one consideration will be the welfare of others.

लोकोऽपि तावदेव भोजनादिव्यापारस्ता-
शरीरधारणावधि ॥ १४ ॥

लोकः social customs अपि also तावदेव in like manner, to that extent only भोजनादिव्यापारः तु activities such as taking food, etc., आशरीरधारणावधि to the extent necessary for keeping up the health of the body till it falls off in its natural course (भवतु) let there be.

14. Social¹ customs and practices also may be followed in like manner to² that extent only. But activities like taking³ food may be continued to the extent necessary for preservation⁴ of the health of the body

until⁵ it falls off in its natural course.

Notes. 1. *Social customs*—Ways of life that are not specifically enjoined by the Scripture, such as particular ways of dressing, rules of etiquette, etc. These are merely social and conventional. The realised man may also do such other actions which may not be sanctioned by the strict letter of the law, but which may be considered by him, on the basis of his realisation, to be more in accordance with the spirit of its teachings. It is these latter actions which generally bring about change in the Scriptural injunctions in course of time. Again, particular and novel situations and circumstances may necessitate a novel application of the truths of the Scriptures. Only the realised man can show how departure from the current practice can be made, without any disrespect for the Scripture.

2. *To that extent only*—To the extent that is necessary for saving the world from pitfalls, for escaping from undue notice from the public, and for not wounding the feelings of society.

3. *Taking food, etc.*—Includes such activities as sleeping, physical exercise, etc., which are all unavoidable for a person who is alive.

4. *Preservation of health*—One cannot serve others without a healthy mind in a healthy body. A realised man considers his own body and mind as not belonging to himself but to the society that brought them into being and nourished them till his realisation, and as such takes care of them as a trustee for society, though he does not care for them for his own sake. He can never be negligent and careless about them, as he has no ego

of his own, which may lead him to such carelessness.

! SUTRA 15

Narada has already given us a fairly detailed account of his conception of Bhakti or spiritual realisation in the first fourteen Sutas. He has pointed out how all functions of the mind co-operate with one another in that state, and are harmonised and integrated into the unity of spiritual experience. He now proceeds to give us a few descriptions of Bhakti as given by some writers who have preceded him, and to show how his own view is more complete than that of any of his predecessors. In the fifteenth Sutra he explains the possibility of describing this ineffable experience, as well as the inevitability of differences in view, the moment one tries to bring it down to the level of thought.

तद्वक्षणानि वाच्यन्ते नानामतभेदात् ॥ २७ ॥

तद्वक्षणानि Its characteristics मतभेदात् on account of differences in view points नाना variously वाच्यन्ते have been described.

15. The characteristics¹ of Bhakti have been described² variously³ on account of differences in view points.

Notes. 1. *Characteristics*—Spiritual experience is, as we have seen, indescribable. Still some sort of description cannot be avoided, at least for the benefit of the future generations. All such descriptions must inevitably fall short of the actual truth; they can at best be only close approximations to the reality. What can actually be observed and described are only the external marks which con-

stitute the expression of the subjective experience.

2. *Have been described*—Description is an intellectual process, and the quality and perfection of the description must, therefore, depend upon intellectual powers such as capacity for scientific observation and analysis, powers of expression, the theological and temperamental prejudices of the observer, the needs and capacities of the audience, the requirements of time and locality etc.

3. *Variously*—No two minds are constituted exactly alike, and as such there is plenty of room for differences and variety in the descriptions of the same experience. Thus those who are predominantly intellectual in outlook must necessarily give an intellectual colouring, those with an emotional bent are bound to describe in terms of emotion, and those of a dynamic temperament must view it from an ethical standpoint. In fact, it is only such characteristics of the realised man as are appealing to one's mind, that can find a place in the description.

Thus in Bhagavatam III: 25, 32 and 33, Maitreya says that Bhakti consists in the mind naturally settling upon the Highest Truth, the root of all existence as well as of the senses; and in III:29, 11 and 12 Kapila describes it as uninterrupted thought flowing towards God seated in the hearts of all creatures, like the flow of waters of the Ganges towards the sea. In the Vishnu Purana we find Prahlada praying that the love which the undiscriminating have for the objects of the senses, be turned into Bhakti by being directed towards God. In the Devi Bhagavatam we read, "As oil poured from one vessel to another

falls in an unbroken stream, so when the mind in an unbroken stream thinks about the Lord, we have what is called supreme Love." The Narada Pancharatra describes it, in one place, as service or worship of the Lord of Indriyas through the Indriyas without being clouded by Upadhis and purified by being directed towards Him; and in another place the same author describes it as unintermittent stream of thought based on the love of God without attachment for anything else. Sri Sankaracharya describes it in the Vivekachudamani as constant thought on the real nature of one's own Self, and says in the Shivanandalahari, that we have Bhakti when the thoughts approach the feet of the Lord and sticks to them permanently, as the seed approaches Ankola tree, an iron needle the magnet, a virtuous wife her husband, or a creeper a tree. Sri Ramanujacharya in Sri Bhashya I: 1, 1, identifies Bhakti with loving meditation. Sri Madhva in his Mahabharata Tatparyanirnaya describes it as an unshakable love, surpassing all others, resulting from the knowledge of the greatness of God. Sandilya in his Bhakti Mimamsa describes Bhakti as supreme love of God, and Swapneswara in commenting on the Sutra says that this love results from the realisation of the greatness of the Lord. Madhusudana Saraswati, in Bhaktirasayana I:3 & I:1 describes it as an unintermittent flow of thought towards God whose form is indelibly impressed upon the heart which has melted in love. In the Bhaktirasamritasindhu, Rupa Goswami describes it as constant enjoyment of God unobstructed by desires for anything else and unclouded by

Jnana or Karma. Jayatirtha speaks of Bhakti as an incessant flow of love preceded by the knowledge that God is possessed of unequalled, unsurpassed, infinite auspicious qualities—a love which exceeds one's love to oneself, one's relations and belongings, which is not retarded or shaken by a thousand troubles and difficulties. Alavandar *alias* Yamunacharya, Ramanujacharya's predecessor and Guru,

speaks of the vision of God as Para Bhakti; union with Him as Para Jnana, and fear of separation from Him is Parama Bhakti. Manavala Mahamuni in his Dravidopanishad-sangati speaks of Bhakti as the direction towards God, of that love which the indiscriminating have for the objects of the senses. Some more views are described by Narada himself in the next three Sutras.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Origin and Early History of Saivism in South India : By C. V. Narayana Ayyar, M.A., L.T. Published by the University of Madras. Pp. 453.

The present book is the result of researches conducted by the author under the auspices of the Madras University. Beginning with the Vedic origin of Saivism, it deals with the early history of the cult in South India up to the first half of the eighth century A.D.

The origin of the Saiva cult has been a matter of much speculation. The question whether Siva was an Aryan or a Dravidian deity, though of no significance to his votaries, has been made a subject of controversy by those who are interested in raking up sordid racial and communal feelings. Fortunately Mr. C. V. Narayana Ayyar has pursued his studies in the interests of pure scholarship and historical accuracy with an unbiased mind, unobsessed by the controversial atmosphere. The wealth of quotations from the original sources which he has displayed in tracing the history of the cult leaves little doubt as to the fact that Rudra-Siva was already a Vedic Deity at the dawn of history. The question whether Vedic Aryans had assimilated this cult from the original inhabitants of India has not been discussed.

Mr. Narayana Ayyar has refuted the belief held by earlier historians that Rudra was exclusively a malevolent deity, and has shown that he was also a benevolent deity even from the Rig-Vedic times, and that one or other of these aspects have been alternately emphasised through the

chequered history of the cult. In the Brahmanas his terrible aspect is more prominent, while in the Upanishads he is the God of Gods as well as the Impersonal Brahman. Some amount of opposition existed between the followers of the Saiva cult and the votaries of the sacrificial cult of the Vedas. It is quite possible that while the Aryans were in dread of him and propitiated him, he might have been a benevolent deity to the aborigines who considered him as their own deity. As Siva was gradually assimilated into the Vedic pantheon, he might have appeared benevolent even to those who at first stood in fear of him. This may explain the fact that the word 'Siva' appears to have been applied to Rudra only much later, *viz.*, in the Upanishads. The Vedic Aryans' dislike of 'Sisna deva', coupled with the fact that Siva, unlike other Vedic deities, could be worshipped by all castes, seems to point to the probability that Siva might have been a Non-Aryan deity, though the names Rudra, Siva, etc., might have been given by the Aryans. The book under review does not, however, draw this conclusion.

By the time of the Svetasvatara Upanishad, Siva had been raised to the position of the highest Godhead, and had attained great popularity. In the Mahabharata period Saivism and Vaishnavism had taken deep root with their own separate votaries. At the same time there were also many who believed that Siva and Vishnu were the different names of the same supreme Being. Definite theologies

began to develop round these deities, and other Gods were given a subordinate place in each pantheon. Sectarianism was growing up, and intolerance had begun to appear. Attempts were also made at theological harmony and synthesis. The Linga worship was assimilated into the Vedic Cult, and Saiva initiation also came into vogue. The doctrine of Ahimsa and vegetarianism were emphasised by the Saivas, and these gradually influenced Brahmanism to the detriment of the sacrificial cult. But as he became a prominent God in the Brahmanical cult, Saiva was made not only the advocate of the sacrifices but was conceived as the chief of the sacrificers. The significance of the Daksha Yaga has been shown to be the triumph of austerities over the cult of sacrifices. Saivism had reached the southernmost corners of India towards the end of the Vedic period.

Discussing the origin of Siva Linga, Mr. Narayana Ayyar rejects the idea that it is a phallic symbol and accepts the explanation of the Linga Purana that the Linga represents the absence of the characteristic marks of the Supreme Being. As an interpretation of a symbol from a philosophical point of view, this position is quite all right. But to-day religious symbols have to be studied also from the broad perspective of anthropology and comparative religion, and it is then that the opposite view becomes significant. But a reconciliation between the devotional and the anthropological views is not an impossibility.

By the time of the Sangam literature, the Vedic religion and mythology had already become the possession of the Aryanised southerners, though their number was not large. There is no mention of Siva in Tolkappiyam and Narrinai, but by the time of Silappadikaram and Manimekalai a pretty large number were Saivas, and Saiva temples had come into existence. The cult at that time (200 A.D.) was free from sectarianism. A big chapter is devoted to the narration of the life-histories of the Nayanars, minor as well as major. In this we find the heights of devotion and asceticism to which the Saiva devotees had risen, as also the bigotry and fanaticism unavoidable in devotional cults. An abundance of miracles and a wealth of

divine grace as the reward for self-effacing and one-pointed devotion, form the theme that runs through the life of the Nayanars.

The earliest Agama literature in Tamil on Saivism is the Thirumandiram of Tirumular. A whole chapter of the book under review deals with this exposition of the theology of the Saiva cult in all its aspects. "What Tirumular did was to render into Tamil the Saiva doctrines as they were found in the Sanskrit Saiva Agamas which were current both in Northern and Southern India for several centuries past. His work became the foundation upon which the later structure of the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy was built." Tirumular lived about the 6th century A.D. According to Tirumandiram the Vedas and the Agamas were both revealed by the Lord, "Vedantam is Suddha Saiva-siddhantam". Those Siddhantins devoid of the knowledge of Vedanta are the common folk." Like Vedanta, Tirumandiram considers Jnana as the immediate means for Moksha. "Becoming Siva is Vedanta Siddhanta Pasu which is the *Tvam-pada* of the Vedanta is said to be the *Pati* when it casts off the *Pasa* which lies beyond *nadantam*. The *Tatpada*, which is the final knowledge of *Bodhantam*, uniting with the *Pati*, is Siva-Sayujya."

The next great period in the history of South Indian Saivism is covered by the lives of the great Tevaram hymnners and Samayacharyas as Sambandar, Appar, Manikkavachakar and Sundaramurti to each of whom a separate chapter is given. Their personal histories and works, the contemporary state of the Saiva cult as attested by their hymns and the nature of the faith that they preached, are all dealt with in great detail. This period was marked by sectarianism and quarrels with Jainism and Buddhism whose followers were finally absorbed into the Saiva cult. The book traces the history of Saivism to the times of Sundaramurti Nayanar.

It is difficult to estimate the value of the author's observations and conclusions on a variety of questions dealt with in the course of the narration. The sources of the book are confined to the recognised sacred literature and a few other contemporary works. The book contains a good index. We wish the long discussions of

dates, etc., had been relegated to appendices. That would have prevented the break of continuity in the narrative in several places, and brought out the general features of each period more prominently. As a first attempt at a continuous history of Saivism in South India the book is a valuable addition to historical literature.

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The Srikara Bhashya Volumes I & II :
Edited by C. Hayavadana Rao. Published by the Bangalore Press, Mysore Road, Bangalore City. Pp. Vol. I, 888 ; Vol. II, 567. Price, for both volumes together Rs. 15 ; separately Rs. 8 each.

In these two volumes of formidable size, the world is for the first time seeing a printed edition of the Sanskrit commentary of Sripatipanditacharya on the Vedanta Sūtras of Badarayana. The first volume, the bigger of the two, contains an Introduction in English—perhaps, the biggest Introduction that has ever been written for any book, extending, as it does, over full 888 pages. The second volume is devoted exclusively to the Sanskrit text and appendices.

All readers of Indian religious literature know full well that it has been the tradition in India for every religious sect to produce a commentary of its own on Badarayana's Vedanta Sūtras. It only testifies to the authoritative character of these Sūtras that even Virasaivism, which began by discarding the Vedic tradition, ended by producing a commentary on these Sūtras embodying the Vedic philosophy. For Sripatipanditacharya, who lived about 1,400 A.D., has attempted in this work to establish that the Vedantic aphorisms of Badarayana yield only a meaning that is in agreement with the fundamental tenets of Virasaivism.

From the theological point of view the chief aim of the commentary is to show that the Parabrahman spoken of in the Sūtras is Siva. Philosophically the view advocated has been described as Dvaita-Advaita, which means a point of view that occupies a position midway between the pluralism of Madhwa and the monism of Sankara. This position is only a branch of the well-known trend in Indian philosophic thought generally known as Bheda-bheda or identity in difference. Sripati contends that his position alone can syn-

thesise the Sruti texts proclaiming the identity of the Jiva and Brahman as the ultimate metaphysical truth, with others which emphasise the difference between the two.

The statement of the relation between Jiva and Brahman is the crucial point in all Vedantic system. Sripati's position in this respect may thus be stated briefly : During the period of bondage Brahman and Jiva exist separately in the relationship of the worshipper and the worshipped, their existence as different entities being absolutely true. In the state of liberation, however, they exist in the relationship of a river towards the sea into which it has winded its way. The Jiva is naturally released of its Jiva state, and attains to that all-pervading, undivided and supreme Akasha form, bears the characteristics of Sat, Chit and Ananda, and acquires all the unrivalled, all-knowing qualities of Parabrahman.

A position like this will no doubt satisfy neither the pluralists nor the monists. But if both these extremists lay aside their bias as philosophical theorists, and view this position as pure spiritual aspirants, they will find that they get in it all that they want for building up their spiritual life. All who are striving for liberation are in bondage, and the very striving presupposes a sense of duality. There is no use of one who is thus a struggler proudly proclaiming his identity with the Supreme. So, too, what does it matter for the dualist if the soul becomes one with God in liberation ? His separation from God, in the state of bondage, is admitted, and that is enough for him to cultivate love of God and to serve one's fellow-beings—the two disciplines that are in themselves capable of taking man to his highest spiritual destiny.

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Altar-Stairs : *By Rao Sahib Dr. V. Ramakrishna Rao, M.A., L.T., Ph.D. Published by Liberty Press, Madras. Pp. 334. Price Re. 1-8 or sh. 2-6.*

This is a collection of essays written by the author from time to time for various Indian periodicals, especially for 'The Indian Messenger', the Organ of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj of Calcutta. The sixty essays comprising the book deal mainly with topics of religious interest,

although towards the end there a few dealing with literary subjects. In the case of a book of this kind, containing disconnected articles that do not presume to develop any single topic, it is difficult to give even a cursory account of the subject matter. In general they may be described as dealing with spiritual Theism—its doctrine, discipline and development, i.e., with the religion and philosophy of the Brahmo Samaj. Dr. Rao, who has himself drawn his spiritual nourishment from the Brahmo Samaj, has transmitted into these writings the spirit of that sublime monotheism preached by Ram Mohan and Keshub, and has, thereby, enlivened his thoughtful presentation of moral and theological problems, with the touch of sincere devotion and deep ethical fervour. The English style too, though somewhat antiquated, has much of literary charm about it.

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No-Man's-Land : *Five articles reprinted from the Aryan Path, February-June 1937. Published by the Theosophy Company, 51, Esplanade Road, Bombay, India. Pp. 91. Price As. 8. Post free.*

The rather vague title of this beautiful little book indicates perhaps the non-sectarian character of its teachings. But one feels, somehow, whether it would not have been more appropriate to call that universal substratum of truth, forming the basis of all religions, by the name 'Every-man's land' than by the one adopted here namely 'No-man's land.'

It is pointed out how religions become superstition by stigmatising the tendency to question its dogma as sinful, and how in opposition to this stands science, with the spirit of inquiry into all the phenomena of nature and of man. "When both the superstition of religion and the materialism of science become an intolerable pack-saddle on the back of mankind, the insubordination which began at the top ferments in the mass, and a kind of mental and moral yeastiness affects the whole body-politic of humanity. Delusions of every kind afflict the multitude and its leaders. Those who remain sober and attentive to the preservation of the good, the destruction of the evils in our civilization—begin to search anew the scriptures of nature and of man, to question in every direction, concerning

themselves not so much with the messenger as with the Message he may bring. Such an epoch is the present." This universal message or the one Wisdom Religion is to be found not in the teachings of priests, historians and interpreters, but of Incarnations and Demi-Gods. The book attempts to give a rational explanation of such conceptions and formulates the fundamental principles of a spiritual view of life. Though at times vague and elusive, it provides very interesting and instructive reading. Many may find in these ideas the intellectual scaffolding necessary for building their spiritual life.

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The Rig Veda As a Land-nama-book : *By Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. Published by Luzac & Co., 46, Great Russell Street, W.C. 1, London.*

In the Rig Veda the Five Aryan kindreds are spoken of as immigrants; they have come from another place across the waters, and have settled and tilled the lands on the hither shore. This process of land-taking has generally been interpreted as referring to an historical immigration of an Aryan speaking people who, fair in colour and sharply distinguished from the dusky pagan Dasyus, crossed the Saraswati in the Punjab and made their home in Bharatavarsha. Dr. Ananda Coomaraswami contends that this is a euphemeristic interpretation of a traditional literature which is, strictly speaking, devoid of any historical content whatever. It is a metaphysical formulation in accordance with a logical order of thought. With the help of his vast scholarship Dr. Ananda Coomaraswami proves the tenability of this view by analysing the meaning and content of certain constantly recurring and characteristic terms in the Rig Vedā like Arya, Panchajana, Sarasvati, Setu, etc.

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The Ocean of Theosophy : *By William Q. Judge. Published by the Theosophy Company, 51, Esplanade Road, Bombay, India. (Second Indian Edition). Pp. 153. Price, Paper Re. 1 ; Cloth, Rs. 2.*

This is a very valuable hand-book on the principles of Theosophical movement by one of its pioneers. The exposition is simple and lucid, and does not seem to demand on the part of the reader any previ-

ous acquaintance with the teachings of Theosophy. It can, therefore, be safely recommended as one of the best books for one to begin the study of Theosophy.

It is not possible here to go into any consideration of the subject matter of the book. Like all authoritative works on Theosophy, it is an attempt at synthesising the knowledge that man has gained through science, philosophy and religion. It is not to be wondered at, if a scientist, a philosopher or a religionist finds in such attempts many things that are mere assumptions, bizarre speculations and useless pieces of information that have nothing to do with the building of character and the culture of the spirit. But if men of those three classes would for a time cast aside the peculiar bent of mind derived from an exclusive pursuit of their respective subjects, and attune themselves to the universal aspirations of humanity, they will find in the highly speculative and often mysterious theories of this book, an attempt to give man some definite and systematic information about the invisible forces that govern the evolution of the cosmos and the personality of man. That there is a place for such an enquiry cannot be denied by any one accepting a trans-physical significance for life, and it may also be legitimate for people, up to a certain point, to seek for information on such subjects. But one must always be aware of the dangers lurking behind such a pursuit, namely, that of dissipating one's intellectual life in a maze of credulity and idle curiosity on the one hand, and on the other of being side-tracked from attempts to build character, to purify the mind and cultivate true longing for God. Generally works on Theosophy are such that they more than justify this apprehension. But the book under review is, however, much more balanced in its trend and tone, and many may find in the information contained therein a basis helpful for pursuing higher spiritual life.

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Personal Memoirs of H. P. Blavatsky :
Compiled by Mary K. Neff. Published by Rider & Co., 34, Paternoster Row, London, E. C. 4. Pp. 323. Price sh. 18.

The compiler of this work is to be congratulated for the very successful way in

which she has been able to produce what is virtually an autobiography of the celebrated founder of the Theosophical Movement, nearly forty-five years after her death. For, but for connecting links and critical remarks here and there, the larger portion of this book consists of extracts from the letters, conversations, etc., of Madam Blavatsky, together with confirmatory evidence of the events referred to in them from the writings and utterances of contemporaries of Blavatsky and the chief associates in her life and work. Besides utilising materials already published, the compiler has incorporated a very large body of hitherto unpublished materials from the archives of the Theosophical Society. The book has, therefore, the appearance of a full-dressed autobiography and one can follow in it the life of Madam Blavatsky in her own words almost from year to year. One gets also details of her life prior to the formation of the Theosophical society. Besides being an admirable production from the literary point of view, the work will be of much interest to occultists too. The book also contains twelve excellent illustrations.

The Life and Teachings of Zoroaster: By Dewan Bahadur T. Bhujanga Rao. To be had of the Manager, Ramakrishna Ashram, Basavangudi, Bangalore. Pp. 32. Price As. 4.

This is a very lucid presentation of Zoroastrianism in all its aspects. The Hindu reader will find it specially useful because it brings out the affinity between the religion of ancient Iran and Hinduism represented in the Vedas.

An Eight-Hundred Year Old Book of Indian Medicine and Formulas : By Elizabeth Sharpe. Published by Luzac & Co., 46, Great Russell Street, W. C. 1, London. Pp. 135.

This book is described as a translation from a very old manuscript in a peculiar form of Hindi, supposed to have been written by a pupil of the great Jain priest Hemchand. It gives a very large number of recipes for the cure of many forms of diseases. Of course no one can vouch for their actual medicinal value.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Swami Avinashananda's Cultural Mission to Fiji

Swami Avinashanandaji of the Ramakrishna Mission, who left India for Fiji on a cultural mission towards the end of April 1937, came back to India in March, landing at Colombo on the 22nd February.

During his seven and a half months' stay in Fiji, the Swami visited every village and settlement there and came into intimate contact with all sections of Indian community. He had to do this work mostly during nights, as it was the season for cutting and pressing sugar cane, and people were, therefore, busy with this work during day time. After a thorough study of the conditions of the people, the Swami made representations to the Government of Fiji for the educational and social amelioration of the people, especially for removing the difficulty felt by South Indians due to the absence of any facility for the teaching of South Indian languages in the educational system of the Island. The Government seem to have attached much importance to his representation as seen from the following extracts from the speeches of His Excellency the Governor of Fiji in the Legislative Council of the Colony :

"Swami Avinashananda of the Ramakrishna Mission is at present in the colony studying social conditions. He has made proposals for the social betterment of Indians, which include education. It is now intended that in selected areas, where Indian communities whose mother tongue is a language other than Hindi are prepared to establish schools in which their children can be taught from the early stages of their education in the mother tongue, Government will encourage and assist them in their endeavours. In this connection the Government is now considering the proposals for the establishment of a cultural centre for South Indians at Nadi, where it is expected that teachers competent to teach South Indian languages may be trained for the future. Both the Director of Education and I are in sympathy with these aspirations, and have undertaken to give practical effect to this sympathy at an early date."

Besides this, in October last the Swami started and organised a Students' Home for both paying and poor residents. More than 100 children are at present in it. He reorganised the South Indian Sangham, at whose invitation he had gone over to Fiji, and got for it a legal status by obtaining for it a special license from the Governor. He formulated a well-regulated plan for the educational advancement of the South Indian community, and collected a substantial portion of the funds required for putting it into operation.

The Swami also tried to bring together the different sections of Indians, who are unfortunately much divided among themselves. One definite suggestion of his for this purpose, that has been put into practice, is to institute a celebration called Bharata Mata Day on the last Sunday in the January of every year. Fijians who are the natives of the Island, are also invited to co-operate. Besides, he has arranged that, on the English New Year's day of the 1st of January, the South Indian Sangam would invite the Fijians for a special celebration, in which a special dance of the Fijians would be arranged.

The Swami feels the need of a regular army of self-sacrificing Indians going over to the Island for the cultural amelioration of the people there. Especially there is urgent need for cultured teachers in Tamil and Telugu, imbued with high ideals.

On his voyages both to and from Fiji the Swami visited New Zealand and Australia. On his return he stayed in Australia for three weeks. On both occasions he gave parlour talks to a large number of people interested in Indian culture.

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Swami Viswananda's Departure to U.S.A.

Swami Viswananda, President of the Ramakrishna Ashram, Khar, Bombay, has been deputed by the authorities of the Mission to take charge of the Vedanta Centre at Chicago. The Swami sailed from Bombay on Thursday, 31st March, by an Italian mail steamer. The Swami was a popular figure in Bombay for about a decade and a half.

To bid farewell to the Swami a meeting of the residents of Khar and the friends and admirers of the Swami was held at Khar in the compound of Laxminagar Pavilion under the Chairmanship of the Hon. Mr. B. G. Kher, Prime Minister of Bombay. On the occasion, distinguished citizens such as Messrs. K. Natarajan, J. K. Mehta, F. J. Ginwala, Seth Mawji Govindji and Prof. V. G. Rao spoke about the philanthropic and selfless work of the Ramakrishna Mission in India and abroad, and paid tribute to the scholarship and personal qualities of the Swami.

The *Bombay Chronicle* editorially comments as follows :

"The Ramakrishna Mission has established a world-wide reputation for service of suffering humanity without distinction of race or creed and for the dissemination of the ideals of universal brotherhood and the harmony of the basic truths of all religions. The catholicity of the outlook as well as activities of the mission was well illustrated by the spontaneous farewell reception held in honour of Swami Viswananda, head of the Bombay branch of the Mission, last week on the eve of his departure to the United States of America to carry on the work of the Mission in that country. Not only Hindus, but a host of Parsi, Muslim, Jew and European friends of the Swami also joined in giving him a hearty send-off and wishing him every success in his mission. From very humble beginning the Khar Ashram has developed into an influential centre of beneficent activities. A large portion of the credit of this success is undoubtedly due to Swami Viswananda. We have no doubt that he will prove a cultural ambassador of this country"

To wish 'bon voyage' to Swami Viswananda his friends and admirers held another function at Cama Institute on Tuesday evening. Madame Sophia Wadia who presided over the function emphasised the mission which India has to fulfill in bringing together all races, classes and creeds, and men and women of various conditions together. "She suggested an exchange of cultural ambassadors between the countries of the East and the West—ambassadors free from political interest, religious prejudices and material or business considerations, and exempli-

fying the religious tolerance that was the characteristic of the Indians." Mr. F. J. Ginwala, Prof. Bhagawat and Seth Mowji Govindji also addressed the gathering in warm words, expressing their regret to miss the Swami from their midst and wishing him all success on his mission abroad on behalf of the motherland. The Swami gave a message of cheer to all, and specially welcomed all the Europeans, and felt extremely glad at the presence of the Italian Consul.

The children of Kher also gave a farewell entertainment to the Swami on Saturday evening with a drama.

In an interview given to the representative of the *Bombay Chronicle* the Swami made himself clear about his mission thus:

Q. How long do you propose to remain in America and what is the object of your visit ?

A. "I will have to stay in the United States of America at least for three years. The Ramakrishna Mission has got a number of centres, and I am being deputed to take up the charge of one centre. The primary object is to live the spiritual life there, and to demonstrate the necessity of introspection and contemplation in the midst of the hustle of American life."

Q. Will you be visiting any of the European countries? Are there any Sannyasin members of the Ramakrishna Mission in Europe? Where are they working and since when?

A. I shall visit Italy, France and England. There are three Swamis of our Mission, working at Geneva, Paris and London. The centres at Geneva and London were started in 1934, Paris in 1937.

Q. Where will be your headquarters in the United States?

A. Chicago.

Q. How many centres of the Ramakrishna Mission are there in the U.S.A., and how many Sannyasins of your Order are working there?

A. There are twelve centres and ten Sannyasins.

Q. What is the object of the activities of the Mission in America? Do you think India has got to teach to Americans, and conversely do you think Indians have anything to learn from the West, especially, America?

A. The Mission does not believe in proselytising. The Swamis of our Mission constantly emphasise the fundamental unity of religions and the glory of true religion. The object is to uplift men and women to higher planes of consciousness. Yes, India can teach America the values of spirituality and learn from America industry and commerce and the power of organisation.

Q. Are the American people imbibing the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda? What is appealing to them most in these teachings?

A. The American people are imbibing their teaching. It is the universality and catholicity of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings which are appealing to them most.

Q. Among what classes of Americans has the response been the greatest?

A. It is amongst the cultured men and women. The thinking section of the American nation do feel the need of contemplative life. One American friend told me: Much of our activity is insanity.

Q. Is there any antipathy among the orthodox Christians of America against the so-called invasion of America by Hindu Swamis—especially Swamis of your Mission?

A. There is apathy. The orthodox and bigoted section in every religion vehemently oppose the intrusion of new ideas. But in spite of their opposition the Vedantic ideas are forging ahead. Recently one American gentleman wrote in the Social Reformer—"Many American minds are fed on Upanishadic thought to-day."

Q. Do you think that the attitude of the Americans towards Indians has anyway improved as a result of the activities of Ramakrishna Mission since the visit of Swami Vivekananda to that country?

A. The phenomenal success of Swami Vivekananda has turned the attention of savants and thinkers of America towards the hoary culture of India. The attitude of the Americans has certainly changed.

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Sri Ramakrishna Temple at the Belur Math

The Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Belur, Howrah, sends the following appeal for publication:

The magnificent temple of Sri Ramakrishna at the Belur Math, the dedication

ceremony of which in January last was witnessed by fifty thousand people, is fast nearing completion. In less than a couple of months the whole edifice will be finished—a standing monument of the love and sacrifice of two American ladies for the glorious ideal of the harmony of all religions preached and practised by Sri Ramakrishna. It is a fulfilment of one of the cherished dreams of Swami Vivekananda.

In point of beauty and sublimity, the Temple is a unique piece of architecture in the whole of Northern India. Already numerous visitors including many Western and Eastern notables have showered their praises on it for its fine proportion and harmonious blend of some of the architectural features of the East and West, ancient as well as modern. The stone-facing of the entire Garbhamandir or main shrine and a large part of the Natmandir or prayer-hall, contributes to the durability of the structure. In fact, it was more with a view to ensuring this than anything else that the Math authorities changed their previous plan of having it built entirely in brick. This, however, has forced them to exceed their original estimate by nearly fifty per cent.

To make up the deficit, an appeal was made to the sympathetic public for funds to supplement the handsome donation of the two American friends. But the response so far has been meagre. We still urgently need a lakh of rupees to meet the debt already incurred as well as to finish the remaining constructions which are vitally connected with the Temple and cannot be put off.

In this exigency we earnestly appeal once more to the discriminating judgment of our generous countrymen. We wish humbly to draw their kind attention to the fact that Sri Ramakrishna to-day is a world-figure, and in view of the immense possibilities for religious unification of the world that Ramakrishna Temple at Belur possesses, is it too much to expect that the comparatively small sum of rupees one lakh will be subscribed by the devotees and admirers of Sri Ramakrishna within a very short time? Let it not be said in criticism that India does not know how to honour her greatest modern Prophet.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXV]

JUNE, 1938

[No. 2

HINDU ETHICS

उपपन्नं हि यत् प्राज्ञो निस्तरेभेतरो जनः । दूरतोऽगुणदोषौ हि प्राज्ञः सर्वज्ञपश्यति ॥
संशयात्तु सकामात्मा चलचित्तोऽल्पचेतनः । अप्राज्ञो न तरत्येनं यो ह्यास्ते न स गच्छति ॥
अप्लवो हि महादोषं मुह्यमानो न गच्छति । कामग्रहपृहीतस्य ज्ञानमप्यस्य न लवः ॥
तस्मादुन्मज्जनस्यार्थे प्रयतेत विचक्षणः । एतदुन्मज्जनं तस्य यदयं ब्राह्मणो भवेत् ॥
संस्कृतस्य हि दान्तस्य नियतस्य यतात्मनः । प्राज्ञस्यानन्तरा सिद्धिरिहलोकं परत च ॥
सतां धर्मेण वर्तेत क्रियां शिष्टवदाचरेत् । असंरोधेन लोकस्य वृत्तिं लिप्सेदगर्हिताम् ॥
दानमध्ययनं यज्ञस्तपो ह्रीराजैवं दमः । एतैर्विवर्धते तेजः पाप्मानं चापकर्षति ॥

It is perfectly intelligible why a wise man gets over difficulties and not one without wisdom. The wise man discerns everywhere right and wrong from a distance. How can the fickle, insensible, unintelligent one full of hankerings do so, harassed as he is by doubts and uncertainties? He who sits never travels. Without a barge the deluded person cannot traverse the vastness of evil. And even knowledge is no barge for one possessed by the evil spirit of lusts. So the discerning person should seek a barge. What is the barge that will save him from sinking? — To be a Brahmana. Being refined, self-controlled, regulated, serene and wise, he will accomplish his ends here and hereafter. He should live by following the path of the good and do his work as becomes an educated man. He should earn his living by respectable methods without exploiting others. By charity, study, sacrifice, concentration, modesty, straightforwardness and self-mastery his prowess will be enhanced and sins effaced.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Chapter 241.

MAN AND HIS DESTINY

[In this and the ensuing issues for the year, we shall publish a series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna's views on the fundamental problems of spiritual life, based on his recorded sayings. In the course of these studies we shall also have occasion to take a passing view of many questions of absorbing interest in modern life and thought. 'Man and his Destiny' is the first of this series.]

I

A GREAT poet once said that man is the greatest study for man. In another age and in another clime, a wise man and a representative of a great culture asked a prominent thinker of another country what the object of his study was, and received the reply that it was Nature. Thereupon the former is said to have exclaimed, "How can you know Nature without knowing man?"

In our own times it was the recognition of the same principle that found expression in a great scientist's description of this branch of study as 'the science of the future'. The meaning of this significant expression is this: the study of dead Nature as undertaken by physics and chemistry has perhaps come to its peak of achievement; but the study of living Nature as revealed in plants, animals and especially man is yet in its infancy. It is the work of the future to develop it, and just as the progress of man in the past few centuries depended on the study of external Nature, the next great strides in his progress can come only from the study of his own nature.

But even in the study of man, the modern mind has not, however, been able to get rid of the peculiar bent it has received by its pre-occupation with external Nature. Its tendency is to describe the higher as nothing but

a development of the lower, and to look upon the reduction of the higher into the lower as the highest object of research. Consequently the modern mind has given a startling answer to the question, What is man? The answer consists in that, physically, he is only a member of an unusually gifted branch of the simian family, collateral with those of anthropoid apes, and that mentally, he is nothing more than a bundle of primitive instincts common to all the higher animals. Not only that, even the specifically biological and mental functions of his as well as of all other creatures are to be reduced ultimately into functions of material atoms. Thus brute matter or unconscious and purposeless Nature, whatever that entity might be, is the only reality in the ultimate sense.

Up to a certain stage such a view of man, based upon a faith in the sufficiency of the reductive process, yields satisfactory results. But the limits of its usefulness are passed when we go beyond the purely physical and vital nature of man, and confront the emergence of higher qualities in him as given in the pure aesthetic sense, or moral impulse, or the mystical intuition. Reducing these aspects of mind into animality, materiality and conventionality does not satisfy the plain man, however much it may be necessary in the interests of scientific orthodoxy. Evidently we feel here the

need for a new method in the study of man.

In religion we find this new outlook required for understanding the higher nature of man. In all religions there is the tradition that man was originally a perfect being, that his present state is a state of degeneration, and that the goal of life is to regain that original condition of pristine purity. Such a theory of human nature is absolutely necessary if we are to understand the simultaneous presence of the higher and the lower, the divine and the animal in man, as well as for justifying our faith in the ultimate possibilities of human nature even in a social sense. For if man is nothing but an animal, we need not expect of him anything more sublime than what we find in the animal world. Thus in the last resort, the religious view of man becomes necessary not only as a support for a theory of salvation in a spiritual sense, but even as a sanction for any expectation we may entertain of a human society based on a higher sense of justice and altruism.

II

There have been two types of views offered by religions as an explanation of the present degraded state of man. One type, represented by Christianity, attributes it to sin, while the other, represented by Hinduism, attributes it to ignorance (Avidya). Both explanations ultimately mean the same thing, the difference being only in the point of view they take of man. For the conception of sin implies that the degradation of man is due to a perversion of the will, while the concept of ignorance traces it to a defect in the cognitive faculty. The first

takes an ethical view of the problem of life, and the second a metaphysical view of it.

With the metaphysical bent of mind characteristic of the Hindu, Sri Ramakrishna interprets the fall of man as a forgetfulness of his real nature. Says the Master : A lioness gave birth to a cub while attacking a flock of sheep, and died immediately after. Growing amidst the flock, this cub forgot its leonine nature and cultivated sheep-consciousness. Thus it bleated like the sheep, and grazed like one of them. One day another lion from the forest attacked the flock again. It was, however, surprised at the sight of the sheep-lion. It caught hold of the latter and tried to convince it that it was a lion and not a sheep, but it would not be convinced. So it dragged the sheep-lion to a well, and showed it the image of them both in water, and made it taste blood. This quickened its latent instincts, and it began to roar like a lion, and thenceforth roamed in the forest as the king of the beasts. The same is the case with man. In his real nature he is akin to the Divinity or identical with Him, but ignorance makes him think otherwise.

Ignorance has not only hidden his real nature from him, but added unto him various appendages (Upadhis) resulting in material changes in his behaviour. When a man dresses like a fop, wearing the fine black-bordered muslin, 'the love songs of Nidhu Babu' naturally come to his mouth. A pair of English boots inflates even a languid man with vanity, and makes him whistle immediately, and if he has to ascend a flight of stairs, he leaps up from one step to another like a Saheb. Such is man under the influence of

ignorance. Not only does he forget his real nature, but his behaviour gets positively transformed. In place of being a god in thought and deed, he behaves like a human being, nay, even like an animal.

III

We may consider for a while whether it is possible to reconcile this view of man as a divine descent, with the scientific view of him as an animal ascent. The principles of Vedanta fully justify a reconciliation. Vedanta admits evolution in matter ; what it denies is evolution in Spirit. By its creative will Spirit manifests itself as the external universe. What is called evolution is the urge lodged within all manifested phenomena to go back to their pristine state as the Spirit. By the working of this urge we get different levels of evolution in the external universe. Each successive step in it is derived from the previous stage of the causal chain, but nevertheless they reveal altogether new qualities unaccountable by their antecedent conditions because of the increasing manifestation of the Spirit. Thus in matter the Spirit or the Divinity is unconscious, and its only expression there is as blind and mechanical force. At the pure biological level, as in lower organisms, it manifests itself as rudimentary vitality, which we call life pure and simple. Going still higher in the scale of evolution, we find the Spirit manifesting as consciousness in the animal, as self-consciousness in man, and as super-consciousness in the saint. In super-consciousness it finally realises its pristine purity as the Spirit. These various levels of evolution more or less correspond to what the Vedanta describes

as the five sheaths or vestments of the Spirit—Annamaya Kosha (material vestment), Pranamaya Kosha (vital or biological vestment), Manomaya Kosha (mental vestment), Vijnanamaya Kosha (intelligence vestment), and Anandamaya Kosha (vestment of pure bliss).

Now the scheme of evolution seems to be such that until the Spirit realises its true nature in the highest Samadhi, the evolving ego carries with it the essential contribution of the previous stage of evolution while at the same time revealing qualities unaccountable by it. Thus life, evolving from brute matter, reveals a new quality, but has its basis still in materiality. Consciousness is something more than life, but it emerges only in a highly organised combination of living cells, the body. So too self-consciousness, with its attendant functions of rationality, ethical sense, etc., comes into being only in the sense-bound mind of man, so strangely full of animality side by side with the higher emergent qualities peculiar to his level of evolution. In the same way super-consciousness manifests in the self-conscious human intelligence, no doubt only when it has largely been purged of its animality coming up from lower levels of evolution, by the influence of the higher qualities that are special to humanity.

Here we find the meeting ground between the scientific view of man and the religious view of him. Man's body and mind no doubt constitute an ascent from animality, and no one need therefore feel annoyed with the scientist if he shows in them the clear imprint of their previous stages of evolution. But man is at the same time a descent of the Divinity, in so

far as he is a stage in the Spirit's self-revelation, in so far as he manifests qualities totally disconnected with animality, and in so far as he has in him the immediate possibility of the full expression of the Spirit in Super-consciousness. Truly is man the offspring of Father Heaven and Mother Earth.

IV

In the state of ignorance man is not aware of his Divine affinity. This, however, is no reason for him to deny the Divine in Him. We see stars in the sky at night, but not when the sun rises. Can we therefore say that there are no stars in the sky during the day? So too it is not right for man to deny the existence of the Divine, because he does not perceive Him in the days of his ignorance.

The goal of human life is to break this spell of ignorance and realise the Divinity. And so to deny that Divinity, according to Sri Ramakrishna, is to make life completely meaningless and ununderstandable. Ciphers placed after a numerical figure get the value of hundreds and thousands, but they become valueless if you wipe off that figure. The same is the case with life. The denial of its basic Divinity, which is also its Divine goal, makes it as valueless as an imposing line of zeros.

But man ordinarily does not keep in view this highest truth of life, which is also the highest good attainable by him. In this respect he is like mice that come to danger, being enticed by the flavour of fried rice. At the doors of large granaries, the merchants place traps containing fried rice. The mice, attracted by the flavour of the fried rice, forget the rice in the gra-

nary and fall into the trap. In the same way man stands on the threshold of Divine bliss, which is like millions of worldly pleasures solidified into one; but instead of striving for that bliss, he allows himself to be enticed by the petty pleasures of the world and loses the Highest.

While the majority of men thus live practically disregarding the Divinity in them, it is not however a necessary law that they should be thus diverted from the highest goal. For man is born with two tendencies—Vidya or the tendency to pursue the path of liberation, and Avidya, the leaning towards worldliness and bondage. At birth, both these tendencies are, as it were, in equilibrium like the two scales of a balance. The world soon places its enjoyments and pleasures on one scale, and the Spirit, its attractions on the other. If the mind chooses the world, the scale of Avidya becomes heavy and man gravitates towards the earth; but if it chooses the Spirit, the scale of Vidya becomes heavier and pulls him towards God.

V

According to the dominance of these two tendencies, men may be divided into three classes—the Baddha or the bound, the Mumukshu or the struggler for liberation, Mukta or the emancipated, and the Nityamukta or the ever-free. The following analogy brings out the distinction between them: A fisherman threw his net in the river and had a large haul. Some fish jumped away even when the net was cast; some lay calm and motionless in the net, without exerting in the least to get out; others jumped but could not extricate themselves; still others somehow managed to force a

way out. The first type represents the ever-perfect, or those who manifest spiritual wisdom from their very infancy and never get entangled in the world. The Master compares them also to the fledgling of the fabled bird Homa. The Homa bird, which always soars in the sky, lays its eggs while on its wings. The eggs drop from such tremendous heights that before they reach the earth they hatch and the fledglings take to their wings. The ever-free are like these birds and the fish referred to ; they go back to the Divinity even before they get entangled in the world. The second type of fish, namely, those that make no effort to escape, represent the bound souls who remain satisfied with the false security offered by the world. The strugglers for liberation are like the third, and the emancipated like the fourth type of fish.

From another point of view the Master classifies men into three groups with the help of the following striking analogy : There are three dolls—the first made of salt, the second of cloth, and the third of stone. If these be immersed in water, the first will become dissolved and lose its form, the second will absorb a large quantity of water but retain its form, while the third will be impervious to water. The first doll represents the man who merges his self in the universal and all-pervading Self and becomes one with It ; he is the liberated man. The second represents the Bhakta or the true lover of God who is full of Divine bliss and knowledge. And the third represents the pure worldling who will not admit even a particle of true knowledge into his heart.

Men are thus of diverse natures and of different levels of spiritual deve-

lopment. But even in the most corrupt, there is the ultimate Divine background and possibility. None of these differences brought about by the evolution of the physical and mental vestments of man can destroy this Divine heritage. For men are from this point of view like pillow cases. The colour of one may be red, that of another blue, and that of a third black ; but all contain the same cotton within. So it is with man : one is beautiful, another is black, a third holy, and a fourth wicked, but the Divine Being dwells within them all. This does not, however, mean that in our dealings with men we should not ordinarily make any distinction between the good and the wicked, the holy and the worldly-minded. The Deity Narayana (God), no doubt, broods over the element water, but every kind of water is not on that account fit for drinking. One kind of water may be used for washing our feet, another for ablutions, a third for drinking, while there are still others unfit even to be touched. So with men. But no one on this account is to be despised. Even those who are unfit to be associated with owing to the extreme degeneracy of their character, are to be saluted from a distance ; for the Divinity dwells in them too.

VI

No one, however, is eternally debarred from the realisation of the indwelling Divinity, inspite of all the sharp differences of character we notice among men. No one, says the Master, has to go without food for the whole day. Some get their food at 9 a.m., some at noon, others at 2 p.m., and others again in the evening or at

sunset. Similarly, sometime or other, in this very life or after many more lives, all will, and must, realise the Divinity.

This succession of births and deaths with all the limited joys and sorrows attending it, is what befalls a man who neglects his Divine possibilities and pursues worldly enjoyments. The chain of re-births is broken only when man realises the Divine. When an unbaked pot is broken, the potter can use the mud to make a new one ; but when a baked one is broken, he cannot do the same any longer. So when a person dies in a state of ignorance, he is born again. But when he becomes well-baked in the fire of true knowledge and dies a perfect man, he is not born again. A grain of boiled paddy does not sprout again when sown. Only unboiled paddy sprouts. Similarly if a man dies after becoming a 'Siddha' (lit. boiled), a perfect man, he has not to be born again; but an 'Asiddha' (lit. unboiled), an imperfect man, has to be born again and again until he becomes a Siddha.

Man's re-birth is determined by what he has been thinking about just before death. But no one can have thoughts of God at the last moment, if he does not sincerely cultivate them all through life with the help of devotional practices. For if a person is worldly-minded, only worldly-thoughts will occur to him at the last moment. There is not much use in merely visiting places of pilgrimage, bathing in the holy Ganges, and counting beads ; if there be worldly attachments in the heart, they are sure to manifest themselves at the dying moment. A parrot may ordinarily sing the holy name of Radha-Krishna, but when it is attacked by a

cat, it cries out 'ka', 'ka'—its natural cry. Hence constant and sincere devotional practices are necessary. If, by these, one's mind is freed from all worldly ideas, then the thought of God fills the mind in their place, and will not leave it even at the time of death.

Man's attempt in this direction will succeed only in proportion to the strength of his dissatisfaction with worldly life, the yearning he feels for God and the one-pointed zeal he has for Divine realisation. But men are like little children wholly absorbed in the dolls and playthings of worldly life. Being taken up with them, they have forgotten their Divine Mother, and the Mother does not go to them until they remember Her and cry for Her in utter distraction of the soul. The Divine, says the Master, is what a magnet is to iron. Why does He then not attract man ? As iron thickly imbedded in mud is not moved by the attraction of the magnet, so the soul thickly imbedded in ignorance does not feel the attraction of the Divine. But when the mud is washed away with water, the iron is free to move. So when, by constant tears of prayer and repentance, the soul washes away the mud of ignorance that compels it to stick to the earth, it feels the attraction of the Divine.

In addition to this thirst for the Divine, man must be prepared to risk anything for Him and strive with patience and persistence for any length of time. Says the Master : There are pearls in the deep sea, but a person must hazard all perils to get them. If he fails to get them by a single dive, he should not conclude that the sea is without them. Let him dive again and again, and he is

sure to be rewarded in the end. In the quest for the Divine, if the aspirant's first attempt proves fruitless, let him not lose heart. Let him persevere in the attempt, and He is sure to realise Him at last.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Disciple

[Sri Saradamani Devi, known also as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the Bengali original.]

THE Holy Mother was talking with me in the morning.

Mother : While living at Kamar-pukur after the passing away of the Master I said to myself one day when I was alone, "I have no son ; there is no one for me ; what will happen to me ?" Then the Master appeared before me and said, "Why are you worried ? You want a son. I have given you all these jewels of sons. In course of time you will hear many, many people addressing you as 'Mother'."

While I was going to Brindavan in the train, I saw the Master look at me through the window of the carriage. He said, "You have my golden amulet with you. See that you do not lose it." The amulet was in my hand. I used to worship it. Later on I gave it to Belur Math and they worship it there every day.

Disciple : Once that amulet was lost on the day of the Master's birthday anniversary. It was thrown into the Ganges together with the flowers and the *bael* leaves. They were careless about it. Then one day at ebb-

tide, while Rishi, the son of Ram Baboo, was playing on the bed of the Ganges, he found it and brought it back to the monastery.

Mother : It is his amulet. One should be careful of it.

The conversation then turned to the Belur Math.

Mother : Before the Belur Math was built I used to have a vision that there was a house, as it were, on the other side of the Ganges on the very site where later they built Belur monastery and where the plantain grove is now, and that the Master lived in that house. After the ground for the Math was purchased, Naren took me there one day and we walked along the boundary line to look at the land. He said to me, "Mother ! this is your own place. You may walk here at will."

I went to see the monastery at Bodhgaya. The monastery was filled with various articles, and the monks had no lack of money. They were very happy there. After seeing this I used to weep before the Master and pray "O Lord, my children have no

place whereon to lay their heads. They do not get anything to eat. They trudge from door to door for a morsel of food. Would they had a place like that." Then the Belur Math was established through the grace of the Master.

One day Naren came to me and said, "Mother, I just now offered an oblation of one-hundred-and-eight *bael* leaves to Sri Ramakrishna that we may have some land for the monastery. I am sure this action will not be in vain. The monastery will surely be built some day or other."

After supper I went upstairs to get betel leaf and heard the Holy Mother saying, "Naren once said to me, 'Mother, for some days everything has been vanishing from before me. Really I find everything is disappearing.' I said to him, 'But see to it, my child, that you do not drive me away.' Naren said in reply, 'Mother, where would I be if I drove you away? The knowledge that destroys the lotus feet of the Guru is verily ignorance. Where does knowledge stay if the lotus feet of the Guru vanish?'" The Mother continued, "God and such things really disappear at the dawn of knowledge. The aspirant then realises that the Mother alone pervades the entire universe. All then becomes one. That is the simple truth"

• • •

The Holy Mother was sorting *bael* leaves for the daily worship when I showed her one of the photographs of her that had been printed recently. I asked if it was a good likeness of her.

Mother : Yes, this is a good picture but I was stouter before it was

taken. Jogin (Swami Yogananda) was very ill at that time. I became emaciated worrying about him. I was very unhappy then. I would weep when Jogin's illness took a turn for the worse and I would feel happy when he felt better. Mrs. Sarah Bull took this photograph. At first I would not agree to it ; but she insisted and said, "Mother, I shall take this picture to America and worship it." At last the picture was taken.

Disciple : Mother, that photograph of Sri Ramakrishna which you have with you is a very good one. One feels it when one sees the picture. Well, is that a good likeness of the Master ?

Mother : Yes, that picture is very, very good. It originally belonged to a Brahmin. Several prints were made of his first photograph. The Brahmin took one of them. The picture was at first very dark, just like the image of Kali. Therefore it was given to the Brahmin. When he left Dakshineswar for some place I do not remember, he left it with me. I kept the photograph with the pictures of other Gods and Goddesses and worshipped it. At that time I lived on the ground floor of the Nahabat¹. One day the Master came there and at the sight of the picture he said, "Hello, what is all this ?" Lakshmididi and I had been cooking under the staircase. Then I saw the Master take in his hand the *bael* leaves and flowers kept there for worship, and offer them to the photograph. He worshipped the picture. This is the same picture. That Brahmin never returned ; so the picture remained with me.

¹ One of the two concert rooms in the Temple Garden of Dakshineswar.

Disciple : Mother, did you ever see the face of the Master to be pale at the time of his Samadhi ?

Mother : Why, I don't remember to have seen it so. On the other hand I have always seen a smile on his face in his ecstatic mood.

Disciple : It is possible to have a smile during the state of lower Samadhi ; but regarding the photograph of his sitting posture, the Master said that it was a picture of a very high exalted state. Is it possible to have a smile in that state ?

Mother : But I have seen him smile in all states of Samadhi.

Disciple : Of what complexion was he ?

Mother : His complexion was like the colour of gold, like that of *harital* (yellow orpiment). His complexion blended with the colour of the golden amulet which he wore on his arm. When I used to rub him with oil I could clearly see a lustre coming out of his entire body. Once one of the sons-in-law of the proprietress came to the Temple Garden of Dakshineswar. He had a very fair complexion. The Master said to me, "We shall walk side by side in the Panchavati. Please note which one is fairer." They did so and I noticed that he was one shade fairer than the Master.

When he would come out of his room in the Temple Garden, people used to stand in line and say to one another, "Ah, there he goes!" He was fairly stout. Mathur Babu gave him a low stool to sit on. It was a rather wide stool, but it was not quite big enough to hold him comfortably when he would squat on it to take his meals. People would look at him wonderstruck when he went with slow,

steady steps to the Ganges to take his bath.

When he was at Kamarpukur, men and women looked at him with mouths agape whenever he chanced to come out of the house. One day as he went out for a walk in the direction of the river, the women who had gone there to fetch water looked at him agape and said, "There the Master goes." Sri Ramakrishna said to Hriday, "Well, Hridu, please put a veil on my head at once or I shall throw away my cloth immediately." "No, uncle," said Hriday, "don't go naked here. What will people say?" The Master said that because he knew the women would run away if they saw him without clothes. Hriday quickly covered Sri Ramakrishna's face with his shawl.

I never saw him sad. He was joyous in the company of all, were it a boy five years old or a man of ripe old age. I never saw him morose, my child. Ah, what happy days those were! At Kamarpukur he would get up early in the morning and say to me, "To-day I shall eat this particular green, please cook it for me." With the other women of the family I would accordingly arrange his meal. After a few days he said, "What has come over me? No sooner do I get up from sleep than I say, 'What shall I eat, what shall I eat?' Then he said to me, "I have no desire for any particular food. I shall eat whatever you will cook for me."

He used to go to Kamarpukur to get relief from severe diarrhoea from which he suffered at Dakshineswar. He used to say "Goodness, my belly is filled only with filth. There is no end to it." Suffering thus, he developed a kind of hatred for the body

and thereafter he did not pay much heed to it.

One day at Kamarpukur, he was going home from the river. There had been a shower. A catfish jumping out of the lake struck his foot. Addressing the fish as he gently pushed it back to the lake with his foot, he said, "Run away, run away; if Hriday sees you, he will kill you right away!" When he got home, he said to Hriday, "Hridu, I saw such a big catfish jumping out of the lake into the road. It was yellow. I released it back into the lake." "Oh uncle," said Hriday, "what have you done! Why did you let such a big fish go? If only you had brought it home we could have enjoyed a nice soup."

Nowadays you see so many devotees everywhere. There is so much excitement and noise. During the illness of the Master one of the devotees ran away in order to avoid giving twenty rupces. The expenses for the treatment of the Master during his illness had been raised by subscription, and this devotee had been asked to contribute that sum. It is not at all difficult to serve the Master now. The food is offered to the Master but it is really eaten by the devotees. If you make the Master sit, he will sit. If you make him lie down, he will stay in that position. After all, he is now a picture.

The Master saw (in a vision) Balaram Babu² with a turban on his head and his hands folded standing by the image of Kali. After that Balaram always remained with folded hands before the Master. He never saluted the Master by touching his feet. The

Master understood his thought and said to him one day, "O Balaram, my foot is aching; kindly massage it gently." Immediately Balaram sent for Naren or Rakhal or one of the boys who attended the Master and asked him to massage the Master's feet.

Disciple: Once I asked Swami Brahmananda about Sri Ramakrishna's complexion. He said, "The Master's complexion was like ours."

Mother: Yes, he looked like that when Rakhal and other disciples met him. At that time he had lost his former good health and complexion. Look at me and see my complexion and health. Did I use to look like this? I was very pretty. I was not stout but later on I became so. When I lived at Dakshineswar I would never come out. The manager of the Temple Garden used to say, "Yes, we have heard that she lives here, but we have never seen her."

At that time I would see the Master perhaps once in two months. I used to console my mind by saying, "Oh mind, are you so lucky that you could see him every day?" I used to stand behind the lattice work of the porch and hear him sing as he improvised the lines of the music. It was standing there so long that gave me rheumatism in my feet. He used to say to me, "The wild bird that is kept day and night in a cage becomes rheumatic. Go to the village now and then for a walk." I used to take my bath at four o'clock in the morning. Then in the sunny afternoon I would sit on the steps and dry my hair. At that time I had a luxuriant growth of hair. I lived in the small room of the Nahabat. It was filled with various articles and for want of

²One of the foremost lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, designated by him as one of his five store-suppliers.

space I had to keep many things hanging in a sling from the ceiling. Still I never complained of my discomfort. I really did not know any.

At that time there was much religious music and ecstasy too. Even Gauridasi³ used to go into an ecstatic mood frequently. She used to say continuously, "Where is Nitayagopal?"⁴ and I would answer, "Who knows where your Nitayagopal is? Perhaps you will find him in an ecstatic mood somewhere on the bank of the Ganges."

It was the time of worship. The Mother made herself ready to go into the Shrine Room. I came downstairs. After the worship was over I went

upstairs again to bring the Prasad⁵ for the devotees. As I took the leaves containing the sweets and fruits, suddenly my elbow touched Holy Mother's feet. "Ah," said the Mother, and saluted me with folded hands. "That's nothing," said I. But she was not satisfied with merely bowing down before me and said, "Come, my child, let me kiss you." She touched my chin with her hand and kissed me and so became pacified. Thus she used to respect her disciples as the manifestation of God, and at the same time show her affection to them as a mother does to her own children.

THE BRAHMA-SUTRAS—WHAT ARE THEY?

By Swami Satswarupananda

[Swami Satswarupananda is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order. In the following article he contends that the Brahma Sutras of Badarayana do not aim at building a system of philosophy, but only at explaining certain obscure Shruti passages that admit of different interpretations and at reconciling some apparently different views of the Upanishads on certain minor topics. The fundamental and explicit doctrines of the Upanishads like the attributelessness of Brahman and the unity of Brahman and Jiva, which their author Badarayana thought indisputable by any student of the Upanishads, are beyond the scope of their discussion. On the basis of this theory the Swami shows the fallacy of those who consider a commentator like Sankara as being unfaithful to the Sutras but true to the Upanishads. The views he expresses herein are well-reasoned and deserve the attention of all students of Vedanta.]

I

HARDLY do we find a philosopher of note who has not been differently interpreted by his successors. Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and many others have suffered the same fate. The question of merits

and defects does not come in here; it is something inevitable, something that is in the very constitution of human intellect.

These different interpretations are due both to subjective and to objective causes. Men are born with cer-

³One of the women disciples of the Master.

⁴A young man very much devoted to Sri Ramakrishna. The Master used to

speak highly of his exalted spiritual state.

⁵Fruits and sweets offered to the Deity at the time of worship.

tain tendencies, which education and environment enhance and do not change. They learn what they love to learn and shun what their nature impels them to shun. Likes and dislikes, born of tendencies of past births, are the real deciding factors in our education. Others are a bagatelle.

Moreover facts cannot be learnt as they are in themselves, each fact being intimately connected with the whole world of them. What we can learn is but their selections, and in the act of selection we distort them and set values which either magnify or belittle them. We can remove our spectacles but not the pair of eyes, for they ensure vision. We can remove to a certain extent the prejudices that we have deliberately acquired but we are well advised not to interfere with the processes of selection and generalisation, for they constitute learning. Every act of learning presupposes one or both of them.

Then again there is the difficulty of language. Thinkers think and mystics see visions ; but they have to translate them into understandable language if they want to share them with others. And this transformation of thoughts and visions into languages is as important to mankind as it is difficult. Visions are simple and their language, too, is similar ; thoughts are comparatively complex and language too is necessarily so. But when they are meant for the general public, their complexity increases ten times.

Generations of philosophers and logicians and grammarians have tried their hands in coining words and phrases and framing rules for the proper construction of sentences with

the only aim of making language a true vehicle of thought. A fine (?) sample of such a laudable work we find in the terrible language of our Navyanyaya¹. Even then it is as unsuccessful as ever. Thoughts cannot be fully transformed into languages ; they must lose something, which is not always unessential.

Difficult as it is to understand another's language, the difficulty increases hundredfold when it is put in the form of aphorisms without verbs or nominatives or both, and leaving wide gulfs in the train of reasoning to be supplied by readers and commentators. In fact aphorisms are hints and suggestions to both memory and reason. These collections of aphorisms have been written with widely different ends in view—some trying to give a complete philosophy, some enjoining social and other duties, and some others explaining the knotty Vedic passages, although the ultimate aim of almost all of them is to lead men gradually to perfection. The collections of aphorisms known as Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa are of the last kind, the former explaining and synthesising the rituals of the Vedas and the latter, their methods of meditation and philosophy. The primary aim of these two collections of aphorisms is to remove all misunderstandings of the Sruti by presenting a true explanation of all the doubtful Vedic passages that have given rise to many heterogeneous

¹Some of the Western psychologists are also approaching the highly technical terminology of the Navya-nyaya type. *Vide*, for example, John Wisdom's *Problems of Mind and Matter*.

opinions in social and religious matters.

This they have done by referring to the Vedas themselves as well as by means of reason, but logic has all along been allowed to play the part of a second fiddle only. The Brähma-Sutras or the Uttara Mimamsa has adduced reasons not only to support its own explanations but to refute other systems of thought that claimed their descent from the Vedas or stood as rivals to them. But all these are but by-products, though to modern students of philosophy they are more valuable than the explanations themselves.

The zeal to expunge unnecessary words has gone so far that we are left to guess, from a word or two of a Sutra or even from an indirect hint, which particular passage is being referred to by it. The passages sought to be explained in particular Sutras or sets of Sutras and the passages referred to as supporting the Sutrakara's own explanations are to be guessed. The Adhikaranas or the topics of discussion, Sutras forming objections and conclusions, and even whether certain words form one Sutra or more, are still undecided. The Advaitins,² no doubt, have made a comprehensive study of these and have solved the problems to their own satisfaction; but others would not accept them for the simple reason that such acceptance leads to the sure Advaitic conclusion. So, even to this day, it is extremely difficult to read the mind of the Sutrakara (the author of the Sutras) from the Sutras only.

There is difficulty in accepting the fact that Sankara got the knowledge

² Others also have done it, as for example Venkatanatha's *Adhikaranasavali*.

from a man of realization who had got it from the direct line of disciples; for, the same claim has been made by all the founders of sects and all the commentators. What then is left to us is to refer the Sutras back to the Upanishads, whose passages they seek to interpret and synthesize. But then there is already an opinion that Sankara is more faithful to the Upanishads than to the Sutras, implying thereby that Badarayana's is not the true interpretation of the Upanishads. But this is held not by the followers of Sankara but by his critics.

Such an opinion, which is extremely dangerous for all honest researches, is not, however, held by all. They alone have a semblance of right, subject of course to all the limitations mentioned above, to study whether Sankara has truly interpreted Badarayana and the Upanishads or not. The verdict, however, can never be final, depending as it is ultimately on the mode of thinking of individual readers and critics.

II

We have stated that the primary aim of Badarayana was to explain some obscure Sruti passages that had, or would have, admitted of various interpretations by bringing out their real implications, as well as to reconcile some apparently different views stated in different Upanishads about some minor topics. To systematise Vedanta was not his chief aim, though he went a great way towards it. This was reserved for the commentators.

This view needs elucidation. Here the "Sruti passages" means the passages of the Upanishads. Now the

Upanishads treat of Brahman in two different aspects *viz.*, Saguna and Nirguna aspects. The Saguna Srutis (or those Upanishadic passages which attribute certain specified qualities to Brahman) are meant for Upasana or meditation. These Upasanas are numerous and complicated—complications being enhanced by the fact that all the attributes that are to be thought of or meditated upon in one particular Upasana are not generally given in one place. They are to be collected from different Upanishads with great care and attention so that the qualities of similar Upasanas may not get muddled up. So whenever there is a danger of such mixing up, Badarayana as the true interpreter of Vedanta is bound to clear them up; and he has done so. But he is not bound to restate all the qualities of all the Upasanas, even of those which are explicit in the Upanishads themselves. That would have served no useful purpose. Interpretations are not meant for driving the original texts out of the market, but for creating greater taste for them. This being so, we shall see Badarayana always throwing light on the obscure passages only, leaving the clear ones untouched.

As with the Upasanas, so with a large number of terms. The same terms have been used by different schools of philosophy, almost all claiming their descent from the same source, *viz.*, the Upanishads. They have been used in widely different meanings, some (*e.g.*, "Prakriti") having been transformed beyond recognition. Then there were differences among the Vedantins themselves as to whether the terms like Prana,

Akasa, etc., mean Para-Brahman, Jiva or any other thing. Again opinions differed as to the nature of Mukti or salvation or as to the possibility of attaining perfection even while one is living. All these the author of the Brahma-Sutras is bound to meet and he has done it very faithfully.

Philosophy, of course, has crossed his path, and Badarayana has done full justice to the philosophical problems that have come in his way of elucidating obscure Vedantic passages. For example, he had to controvert the Sankhya-Karana-Vada or the Sankhya theory that the unconscious Prakriti is the ultimate cause of the universe. A cursory glance at the Brahma-Sutras is sufficient to convince one as to how great was the influence of the Sankhya philosophy at that time and what great effort our author is making to prove it false. The refutation of all other theories are but secondary to him. The tussle with the Sankhya philosophy is from the very beginning. In fact it is even in the very second Sutra where a definition or rather a description of Brahman is given. This description is of the nature of a challenge to the Sankhyas. This Sutra is so worded as to form a direct contradiction of the Sankhya-Karana-Vada. From here right up to the Tarkapada, and even beyond that, whenever any occasion has arisen, we see our extremely cautious author pointing out the falsity of the Sankhya theory. He is never weary of it, he has gone so far as to transgress the orthodox law of non-repetition. But the refutation of this Sankhya theory and of other schools of thought has come only by the way. For just after this rebutting

(in the Tarkapada), we find our author again engaged in the pleasant duty of explaining the Upanishadic texts and removing apparent contradictions in them. And in doing this he has dealt with God (Brahman), Nature, and soul and soul's bondage and emancipation—the things which form the subject matter of all philosophy. Still we say Vyasa has not given us a system of philosophy ; for he has left certain fundamentals untouched.

III

What are the fundamentals that Badarayana has not made clear in his Brahma-Sutras, for which we are audaciously denying him the credit of a perfect system-builder ?

Before discussing this we must make our own position a little more clear. Sankara and his followers do not find anything in the Upanishads which have not been taken up in the Sutras and have not been properly elucidated ; and we, as Sankarites, share the same opinion. But others hold different views ; and judging from the Sutras alone and putting on them the sort of literal interpretation that they claim to put, we have no objection to allowing them the right to do so. The inevitable result of such views and interpretations will be to deny Badarayana the honour which Sankara and Sankarites shower on him. Let us see how.

Badarayana has proposed Brahmajijnasa or enquiry into Brahman Itself and into all matters relating to it as the subject-matter of his work. As such we can rightly expect of him an exhaustive treatment of Brahman Itself, if not of other things. But we find him observing perfect silence re-

garding the Nirvisesha Brahman or the Absolute. This is somewhat strange. Critics of Sankara are not to be jubilant over it. The Nirvisesha Srutis are too numerous to be ignored and too clear to admit of text-torturing. To explain away clear and unambiguous terms like 'Nirguna', 'Nirvisesha', 'Nishkala', 'Asthula', 'Ananu', 'Neti Neti', etc., are downright cases of text-torturing evident to all impartial critics. This being so, it seems strange that this aspect of Brahman should escape the eyes of one who is going to offer us a "system" on Brahman. Search throughout the Sutras without reading the Bhashyas, and you will never come across one aphorism that deals with the Nirvisesha aspect of Brahman.³ He has spoken of Brahman as "the Efficient and Material Cause of the universe" as "conscious", as "blissful", as "the indwelling Spirit," as "the Eater or Destroyer of everything," as "the Upholder of this earth and that", as "all-pervading", as "the Ruler of all", etc. Many of these attributes the Sutrakara ought not to

³Sankara, of course, finds it fully discussed in the Anandamayadhikarana. But other commentators differ. Taking the Sutras themselves, it will be evident to all that Vyasa's contention is that the term 'Anandamaya' refers to Brahman and to nothing else. In all the eight Sutras comprising the section he keeps mum over the nature of Anandamaya.

The same difficulty is experienced in the interpretation of the Anandadyadhikarana (33 11-13). The Sutras mean to say that Bliss, Knowledge, etc., are to be combined into one—as regards 'into what', the commentators differ. Sankara says it is no Vidya or Upasana ; Ramanuja says it is. Vyasa's point is that the attributes should be combined to form an idea of Brahman.

have mentioned as they are implied in other attributes already mentioned in one or other of the preceding Sutras. But he is so very careful that he would not allow anything to be guessed, lest in guessing people should commit mistakes and get a wrong notion of Brahman.

But is it not very strange that one who is so particular about the Savishesha aspect of Brahman would be so oblivious as not even to mention the Nirvisesha aspect? Had he held views similar to or identical with those of the non-Advaitins, he ought to have mentioned such Srutis and brought out their true implications. Such taciturnity on the part of one who has moved heaven and earth to prove his points in the Anumanik-adhikaranam (1.4, 1-7), the Chamas adhikaranam (1.4, 8-10) and the Apasudradhikaranam (1.3.34-38), is quite surprising. The only conclusion that can be drawn from all these is that the Sutrakara has never aimed at building a system but has all along been trying to throw light on the obscure Sruti passages. He has not dealt with the Nirvisesha Srutis because they are too clear to admit of misinterpretation.

Another important point that has not been dealt with properly is whether Jivas or finite souls are *by nature* separate or distinct from Brahman. Such a statement is more astounding than what has gone before. Badarayana has devoted no less than 21 or 22 Adhikaranas besides some stray Sutras to clear the conception of Jivas as distinguished from Brahman. Beginning with Atmadhikaranam (2.3. 17), or more particularly with Jnadhikaranam (2.3.18) according to Ramanuja, and Utkrantigat-

yadhikaranam (2.3.19-32) according to Sankara, as well as in Sutras 1.1.16 and 17, the Sutrakara has laid down the distinction between Jivas and Brahman very carefully and, so far as his points are concerned, very clearly too.

Still the point that we have raised is undecided. The question is not whether the ordinary Jivas or Jivas in the clutches of Maya are distinct from Brahman, but whether they are *by nature*, i.e., as they are by themselves apart from the limiting adjuncts, distinct from It. Here we do not find a definite answer sufficient to silence the philosophical doubt. Nor can it be said that such doubts were uncalled for at the time of the Sutrakara; for there were at least three different opinions, *viz.*, those of Ondulomi, Asmarathya, and Kasakritsna on the exact nature of the two entities, Vijnanatman and Paramatman. One finds numerous passages in the book where a sharp and clear distinction has been drawn between the two; but in all these cases Jivatman is spoken of as under Maya.

To get at its true nature we must see it when it is beyond Maya; and this we get in Sutras 4.4.5-7. But here too we are disappointed. Two contradictory views have been reconciled by one stroke of the pen by saying that they are not contradictory. No reason is given as to why they are not so and commentators are left to guess as they like. A vagueness as to the real nature of Jivatman with ample scope for the wildest guess-work is what the reader of the Brahma-Sutras gets as his reward, when he goes to close the book.

We will take up one more point, and perhaps the most important point, to show that Badarayana never aimed at giving us a "system" in the Brahma-Sutras. He has not said anything about Avidya. One might not take it in Sankara's sense. But that there is something somewhere which has veiled Brahman or God from us, that we are in our present state under a sort of hypnotic spell due to which we are wandering away from the Eternal Source of Bliss, has been accepted by all the commentators and perhaps by all the modern critics. It is no use objecting to the term Avidya. Call it by any name, but you are to explain this mystery of all mysteries.

If God is infinite and perfect, why is this world and what is it? To call it a mere play (2.1.33) is no explanation. Lila and Maya are philosophically the same thing. One who objects to Maya ought to object to Lila also, if one wants to be impartial; for both, in the last analysis, comes to the flat admission that this mystery baffles all understanding. Has he created it out of fun from within Himself? Very good, but what is the nature of this fanciful creation? Is it real or unreal? Is it like our own imaginings, only infinitely more complex, subtle and abiding? Or is it like our creation with the help of materials collected from outside, only in His case it is from *within*, there being no *without* for Him? As to this we are left in an awful silence. And why? Is it not one of the most fundamental questions of philosophy? If Sankara has no right to evolve his Adhyasa theory from the Sutras, Ramanuja or any of the modern critics of Sankara too has no right to posit that this

creation is real in the sense Sankara uses the term 'real'. For the Sutras do not say either.

A book, which is mute over such fundamentals, cannot be said to offer a system of philosophy. The philosophy is there in the Vedanta or the Upanishads, and Badarayana has added important, *sometimes* exhaustive, annotations. The writers of different commentaries have found in these very terse notes, such hints as have enabled them to understand the Vedanta more clearly and to evolve different schools of thought, each having its own beauty and each true so far as it goes.

IV

Those who have studied the Vedanta-Sutras both with and without the help of the Bhashyas or commentaries cannot but admit that each and every commentator has said many things which, from the mere words of the Sutras, we do not get but which may not contradict what have been explicitly indicated by them. The characteristics of Bhashyas sanction it.⁴ Bhashyakaras or commentators are given this privilege of adding new things provided they do not run counter to the Sutras themselves. But for this privilege, we could not have got any Indian philosophy worth the name. The ancients knew it and have given their sanction to such privilege. A Bhashyakara would not be entitled to that name if he has nothing to add to the already existing stock of knowledge; but he is never allowed to do so at the expense of the Sutras.

⁴ Sutrartho varnyate yatra padaih sutranusaribhih.

Svapadani cha varnyante bhashyam bhashyavido viduk.

But how is it possible to be faithful to the Sutras and at the same time add new thoughts? When we consider that interpretations are not truths but our ways of looking at them, we find it easy to explain this. We need not be torturing texts or be conscious liars. We can be true to ourselves and to the texts, and yet we can express them in a way that will be new to a great extent, for we look at them from different angles of vision. There are, no doubt, literary cheats and charlatans, but we leave them out of our consideration. Honest men, learned and intelligent, can both be faithful to the texts they go to interpret and add to the stock of the already existing knowledge. Naked truths, when they seek for expression, must put on modern garbs to appear in modern society.

So if we find a commentator saying anything that is not expressly stated in any Sutra or group of Sutras but is implied by them and appears to be the logical outcome of the reference of the Brahma-Sutras as a whole to its source, the Upanishads, we cannot condemn him; for he is perfectly within his rights as a Bhashyakara. Moreover if there are terms in some Sutras which admit of more than one interpretation, and if a commentator explains them one way rather than another, we have nothing to say against him, so long as it involves no internal contradictions nor goes against the source books. To say that it runs counter to the general trend of the Sutras is too weak a peg to hang such a weighty criticism on.

ON DEATH

By V. Subrahmanya Iyer

[Mr. Subrahmanya Iyer, retired Registrar of the University of Mysore and a well-known philosopher of modern India, brings out in these paragraphs the significance of death according to religion and philosophy.]

THE sorrow that death brings is as universal as it is intense. There is no house that has not experienced this pain sometime and that most bitterly. When it comes, most men succumb to it for the time, and some continue to be unhappy for years. But a few feel provoked to enquiry and thought. It is these few that tell us that pain and sorrow could be overcome and that the chief means to it lies in knowing the meaning of sorrow, suffering and death.

Change, when perceived naturally, provokes thought which leads one ul-

timately to knowledge. Striking changes rouse deep thought. And one of the most striking changes or phenomena is death, especially because it causes pain, which sets the human mind a-thinking deeply. The thought is directed primarily towards seeking the means, if that be possible, to overcome pain or sorrow. This enquiry naturally takes one to the question of the meaning of pain and death.

The answers to the questions put, have varied with men's temperaments and intellects. The several solutions

may be broadly grouped under two heads : (1) Religious, and (2) Philosophical.

Religion finds satisfaction in the belief that after death, that is, after death of the body, there is another existence, which continues to eternity. Then will the soul of man realise its immortality and that in a spiritual or ethereal body. The soul will then find its compensations for all its sufferings or losses in this world. And it will also be duly punished for its wicked acts in this life. Lastly, will come God's grace and his blessings in a variety of ways. These compensations, punishments, graces and blessings vary with the hopes, actions and wishes that the believer cherished in this world.

Some religions tell us of an eternal future life with our dead kith and kin, others tell of a life with charming women and friends, or of a life lost in admiration of God's throne and glory. In short such is the immortality vouchsafed by Religion that one finds after death all that one wishes for. This belief is strengthened by a variety of impressive funeral ceremonies after death.

Such religious views imply a certain unreasoned autocracy on the part of God, the Creator; for, it is not clear why men should be prompted to do wicked deeds, why temptations should be placed before them, why they should be punished for their weaknesses. To avoid difficulties, the Hindus believe in re-birth, according to the law of re-incarnation, on earth, which makes man reap as he has sown in his past. But the religious solutions, though they have satisfied and do satisfy the immense majority of mankind, do not carry conviction to

some minds which do not feel assured of an immortality which is promised after death. And they do not find consolation in future immortality in spite of all the charms of existence after death ; it is no solution of the real problem. What man is not pained at his death here in this world and death of this earthly body ? Of what use is it to him to be told that there is no remedy against this mortality and that there is a future immortality of a something other than this body ? The solution that Religion offers is therefore felt by some to be far from giving the satisfaction sought. Those that feel the futility of the religious immortality and set about studying the nature and significance of death, are called philosophers. Their first step is a scientific study of this striking phenomenon.

Plato, the philosopher, put into the mouth of Socrates the statement that all philosophy springs from the phenomenon of death : " Philosophy is the study of death." In fact the highest philosophy in India starts with the subject of death. For instance it is so in the Bhagavad Gita, the Kathakopanishad and the Chandogyopanishad. The aim of philosophy is to ascertain the meaning and the truth of all experiences including death. This enquiry has been carried to its farthest boundary only in India, where they have come to the conclusion that it is possible to overcome pain and death of this body, nay, all sorrow. It does not seek consolation in the deathlessness of a future body as in Religion. It wishes to make sure whether in this body, here on this earth and now, any remedy could be found against death. Vedanta has an answer in the affirma-

tive. It says that even this body is found to be the Brahman, that is immortal, by one that knows the Truth. Once upon a time even the Lord Buddha, when asked by a sorrow-stricken person to revive her dead child, said that the only remedy lay in knowing the truth about death and that there was no other way of freeing oneself from death or sorrow.

In pursuing Truth, science demands proof in the absence of which it relegates all beliefs to the world of unproven hypothesis, guess or imagination. The evidence for spiritual existence after death, advanced by the great scientist Oliver Lodge, leads at best only to hypothesis, but not to a certainty. He seems to be still under the influence of his old religious beliefs. For Hindu scientists and philosophers rely upon public or universal reason, and not upon private or individual experiences such as those relied upon by Oliver Lodge. According to Indian philosophers, to think that to be truth which pleases or satisfies one, is the religious mentality, whereas to seek satisfaction in what is proved to be true, is the philosophical attitude. Indian philosophy, like European science, studies first the material body as part of the material universe. It holds that death is a kind of change

not different from the changes observed in the world around us. In fact the body is undergoing change constantly, in other words, dying constantly. It looks strange, Vedanta observes, that one should be always dying and yet be afraid of death.

Philosophy in India begins by analysing experience or knowledge. It analyses all existence into two factors—mind and matter—mind including all that is called in Religion as soul or spirit, and whatever is said to be 'internal', and matter including one's own body and the 'external' world of space.

These two factors are named Drik and Drisyam, the seer and the seen, or the knower and the known, each of which is in turn analysed still further till what is called ultimate Truth is reached. The most determined pursuit of truth along the lines indicated above results in the philosophic solution, that all is Brahman the Eternal, and that nothing really dies. One who wishes to be convinced of this fact has to study Vedanta. Death is but a powerful call to think, to ponder, and to seek the goal of Truth, with a determination not to stop till the goal is reached.

SAINT ANTONIO OF PADUA: SOME GLIMPSES AND IMPRESSIONS

By Wolfram H. Koch

[Mr. Koch is of German nationality. He is a staunch friend of the Vedanta movement in Europe. India has known much about Christianity as preached by the different churches, but little of it as lived and interpreted by its saints and mystics. In the present study the reader is afforded a glimpse of the character and teachings of Sant' Antonio of Padua (born in Lisbon on 15th August 1195 and dead on 13th June 1231), known as *il santo di tutto il mondo*, the saint of all the world. The life and message of this and other mystics of Europe only go to prove the great Vedantic truth that all religions in their essence stand for the same God and the same spiritual ideal.]

"Just as in the image of the Lord or of the Blessed Virgin painted on wood one honours the Lord or the Blessed Virgin, and neither the painting nor the wood keeps anything to themselves, the servant of God is like a painting of God in which honour is rendered to God for the benefits given, but he himself must not arrogate anything to himself. For compared with God the wood and the painting are of less value, rather a mere nothing. So one should attribute to God alone glory and honour, and to oneself only dishonour and tribulation, so long as one lives amidst the miseries of this world."
(Tommaso de Celano)

T is evening. In the soft twilight of the Basilica del Santo at Padua the candles burning on the altar and tomb of Sant' Antonio shed their mellow radiance on the walls of the little side-chapel that has been his resting place ever since the last transference of his bones in the year 1350. An atmosphere of great holiness and peace pervades it and imperceptibly penetrates into the hearts of all, of the worshipper and the sight seer. One after another the devotees of Sant' Antonio pass behind the altar, touch with their right hand the porphyry-slab behind which his last remains are enshrined, and become absorbed in intense prayer and contemplation, cut off from the bustle and noise generally prevailing in the rest of the immense church.

Young men and young women with faces beautified by their expression of deep reverence and recollectedness, silently voicing their yearning and hope to the 'Saint of all the World',

as he has been called—old people and invalids—an endless procession of human suffering and human aspiration after the Divine, all wrapt in the golden light of the votive candles, their figures mellowed and dimmed and, as it were, spiritualised, by the twilight around them. Centuries have passed by. Kingdoms and empires have come and gone, but still this stream continues without losing in intensity. Why? Because the human heart feels the need of a love like Sant' Antonio's, a love wholly given to God and embraces all and is beyond all doctrinal squabbles between the so-called orthodox and the so-called heretic, a love that knows only one aim—to sacrifice itself for others and for the highest ideals and aspirations of men.

Times have changed since the passing away of this great saint of Europe at the Arcella near Padua, but the human heart and its yearning are still the same as in his day, both being

eternally bound up with, and interpenetrated by, the Divine which never ceases to call them home to peace and harmony, and to that love which knows neither hatred nor condemnation but only sacrifice.

* * *

Born at Lisbon, Fernando of Bouillon, as Saint Antonio was called in his early life, possessed even from childhood an abundance of winning gentleness combined with infinite tenderness of soul, radiating the light of purity and inward greatness. With regard to his boyhood, legends tell us of his first temptation by the Evil One in front of the altar of the Virgin in the Cathedral at Lisbon. While he was wrapt in prayer, the Evil One appeared in a menacing attitude, but the purity and spirit of sacrifice of the potential saint triumphed over him. He heard the harmonious strains of a choir of angels singing Hosannah—the song of his first victory over lower nature. And it is said that crying with emotion, young Fernando made a solemn promise to the Mother of Christ smiling at him from the altar, vowing himself to God and His service and consecrating his whole life to Her for evermore. Thus this vision became the first stage on the long and thorny road to sainthood, which was never to be left again.

Fernando of Bouillon professed at the Augustinian Monastery of S. Vicente-de-Fora at Lisbon and received his theological training at the monastery of the Holy Cross at Coimbra. Led by his intense spiritual yearning, he became a Minorite brother afterwards, assuming the name of Brother Antonio to hide his noble lineage. It was here in the

solitude and quiet of the Franciscan retreat of the Oliveta that he underwent the necessary mystic and ascetic training, crowning the intellectual and theological knowledge he had acquired from his former Augustinian brothers. In 1224, while staying at Vercelli, he took some private lessons in Mystic Theology from the great commentator on the teachings of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, Thomas Gallus. Sometimes later St. Francis, who saw in St. Antonio the true Minorite Brother corresponding to his ideal of devotion, simplicity, purity of heart and deep learning, made him the teacher of theology in his Order. In a famous letter addressed to Antonio after his first public sermon at Forli, St. Francis wrote: "It is my wish that thou shouldst teach the brethren theology, provided that the study of Holy Prayer and the spirit of Devotion prescribed by the Rule do not become extinguished in them."

This was the beginning of the Chair of Theology in the Minorite Order, inaugurating that famous Franciscan School, the rival of the Dominican Schoolmen.

St. Francis himself never really thought of converting the multitude with the help of the art of oratory and the weight of scholarly arguments. He was the minstrel of God singing for the mere joy of song, preaching compassion, forgiveness, peace and godliness in a spontaneous upwelling of the heart and superhuman meekness, and thus bridging the gulf that usually yawns between man and man. But he never reached the sonority and grandeur of a fugue with the majestic play of its recurrent motifs and the stateliness of its movement. S. Antonio, on the other hand,

always remained the Portuguese knight full of the spirit of chivalric adventure, boldly meeting the intricate problems of his day with his marvellous eloquence and erudition, enhanced by the saintliness of his life. His tunes may have been less sweet and touching than those of the Poverello di Dio, but they possessed greater sonority and all the charm of the varied pattern of contrapuntal themes poised on the deep note of a long-drawn-out organ-point—the Divine. Both led many a soul that had gone astray back to God, filling it with new hope and aspiration, and each was one of the greatest messenger of the Divine given to the West. St. Francis was like a seraphic vision passing over hill and dale, through city and village, and radiating mildness wherever he went. He drew the hearts of the people by his childlike simplicity, candour and innocence. S. Antonio was the chivalrous fighter of the Minorite Order, combining infinite love and tenderness with the strength and fearlessness of knight-hood. He preached in churches, in the public square, the market place, on the banks of the dreamy, slow-flowing rivers of the Northern plains of Italy, in borough and city, everywhere, and his words were like flashes of lightning, and many a time, even like thunderbolts falling on the heads of the wicked and the Machiavellian. He captured people by the power of his intellect together with the imperceptible attraction of his love, sweeping them along with the beauty of his parables and similes, and with unshakable conviction in his voice, winning the aristocrat and the scholar the farmer and the artisan. And even if his words often cut and lay open

terrible sores that had been cautiously covered by hypocrites or allowed to fester indefinitely in an indolent spirit of *laissez faire*, he never does so for the pleasure of condemning anybody, but only as the conscientious surgeon wishing to heal the wounds and tumours that had formed in the social and religious body of society.

He was no respecter of persons. Always remaining the chivalrous opponent, unwavering and unflinching before praise and honour, always proclaiming the truth to those in power as well as to the poor and homeless, to the dignitaries of the Church of Rome and to the most ignorant woman coming from some out-of-the-way valley or some hamlet in the marshes, he never suffered himself to be diverted from the path he knew to be right or from the point he was aiming at for the good of his fellow-men.

It was his great and glorious mission in life to resist the overbearing, the imperious, the dictatorial, the lustful,—in short, all those responsible for the decadence and deprivation of the people on the one hand, and on the other hand to lift up the suffering masses, the poor and ignorant, from this cowardly but all too easy oppression at the hands of their masters. On both sides he tried to foster the sense of the sacredness of life in all its forms through a true appreciation of the infinite charity of Christ who, to him, had a smile and a caress for every human pain, no matter whose fault this pain was or who suffered it.

All this makes the noble personality of the saint rise far above the general ruthlessness of the 13th century and gives him a special radiance guiding the thoughtful and shedding

its illuminating glow on the political, religious, moral and civic aspects of human life.

Even in the terrible fight against the so-called heretics of the 13th century, the Patarins, Catharists and Albigenses of the South of France and Italy, he is almost the only son of rank and influence of his Church who avoided the unspeakable crimes committed by power-intoxicated prelates, fanatical monks and rapacious Christian princes posing as the true and obedient sons of Christ, and who always refused to become the sophistical assassin. Though a firm believer in the dogma of his Church, he never believed persecution could be a substitute to convincing people by example and peaceful persuasion. His love of Christ and the Virgin made him recognise that none was qualified to persecute another in the name of God, and his attitude in this respect is expressed in the words: "If I am not sufficient to correct and better people through preaching, exhortation and good example, I do not wish to become a hangman, punishing and whipping like the potentates of the world."

The exceptional greatness of St. Antonio which surpasses all the success of his eloquence and erudition lies in his deep and reverential love for humanity; and in his case it was true love, not that kind of love men generally give expression to in words, while continuing to hug their ego at the same time, and which, after all, can be one of the worst manifestations of arrogant worldly-mindedness. Antonio's heart burnt with a bright flame of infinite affection for his brethren, and deeply absorbed in God, he had on earth no other delight

than this feeling which, similar to St. Francis', embraced all creatures and all plants.

He who had stressed and exalted chastity and continence from the very days of his adolescence, knew but this living, pulsating, intense spiritual tenderness for all humanity, nay, for the whole of creation; and to lessen its sufferings and bring light to its blinded eyes he consecrated all the efforts of his apostolate, renouncing sleep and food and all amenities of life and all personal affections, so as to be able to pass his days in the inner aloofness of prayer and meditation for love of his fellow-men.

It is the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that a deliberate and sincere will to be perfectly continent is capable of restoring a certain spiritual virginity even to those who had been leading an incontinent, immoral or a married life during a certain period. That which such persons have lost for good in body, can again be found in a certain way through Divine Grace in the path of penitence for the spirit. Freed from all forms of earthly love, the power of affection turns in a mighty blaze to the delights of the spirit and to the supernatural. St. Antonio knew purity of body and mind to be the *sine qua non* of spiritual life, but his heart went out in a mighty upwelling of love to all those who wallowed in the mire, who had even lost the right to be called by the name of man, because he knew that what had been lost for good physically, might with the help of sincere striving and grace be restored mentally and spiritually, and that in many cases the light would not have dawned for such persons but for the preceding dark-

ness and desolation of sense-life and inordinate personal attachments.

For S. Antonio, as for all mystics, the mission of man is to return to God through the well-known steps of purification, illumination and perfection, which, though different in expression, correspond to Yama and Niyama and Samadhi in the path of Yoga. And as a mystic St. Antonio never enters into long debates on the speculative side of theology and religion, does not philosophize, but exhorts and moralises. That is why we find very few traces of philosophical thought and speculations in the abstracts of his sermons. The home-coming to God finds its best expression in his 'Concordantiae morales Bibliorum' (Moral concordances of the Bible), where he says that, if a soul succeeds in being in direct touch with the Divine, all its vileness, all its imperfections and lowness are converted into glory, splendour and grace, and no trace of baseness is left. But in order to attain to this transformation the soul must always and everywhere yearn for its Lord and consciously practise all those virtues which are the means to the realisation of its sublime longing for union. S. Antonio gives us a list of these virtues. They are : Contrition of heart, confession by word of mouth, satisfaction of work, love of God and one's fellow-men, steady and unbroken practice of the inner and contemplative life and unshakeable perseverance till the very end. With the help of these virtues practised with an indomitable will and purposefulness, the soul lifts itself up to God, borne aloft on the two wings given it by Divine Compassion *vis.*, fasting and prayer, to which must be joined humility,

charitableness, continence and deep contemplation of the Eternal and Divine.

In his mysticism S. Antonio was akin to the great Scotus Erigena, but his nature is more fiery and dynamic—the impetuous, easily inflammable nature of his race, the nature of a knight turned Godward.

It was a very characteristic trait of S. Antonio that he set his whole influence against those currents of his day which stood for relaxing the rules of the monastic life. He fought for the application of the strictest and most unrelenting principles of penance and austerity in their absolute integrity, and always asserted them with all the power of his marvellous eloquence. His character abhorred compromise because of his straightforwardness and force of conviction, because to him a child of the Virgin and Jesus could not haggle for Divine truths with the world, nor adjust his ways to those considered fitting and decorous by the worldly mind.

The following passages translated from the Latin abstracts of his sermons, scanty as they are, may give the reader some idea of St. Antonio's way of bringing truth to the door of everybody :—

"The air seems pure to us so long as it remains in the shadow, but as soon as a ray of the sun penetrates into the room, we see that the air is full of dust. That ray is the realisation which shows man the defects of his own conscience and reveals minutely what previously remained hidden. O City of Jerusalem ! O soul created in the likeness of God ! remember thy Creator who made thee and who shall judge thee. Remember this in the days of thy youth when thy age is inclined to err, but also quick to repent."

Always S. Antonio recommends charity as the power redeeming man

of his weakness and evil ways, charity as the great and irresistible saving impulse of man :

"Let us be compassionate, imitating the cranes which are said to balance themselves in the air when they go to a certain place, so as to be able to see from that height which goal they can reach. The one possessing the strongest voice precedes the whole flight and discovers the dangers and assembles the whole flock with its cry. If its voice begins to fail, another crane replaces it. All are agreed to help the tired ones, and if one faints, all assemble and support it until it regains its strength. Thus let us, too, be compassionate like the cranes so that, placed in the highest positions of life, we are given power to provide for ourselves and for others. Let us show the way to those who ignore it, and let us quicken the lazy and half-hearted. Let us relieve one another in our work. Let us support the weak and the diseased in order that they may not faint on the way. Let one stand up for all in the vigils of the Lord with prayer, contemplation and supplication. If anything in the world wants to attack us, let us cry, 'Be on thy guard !' And above all, let us flee from the round or the blind vanity and futility of the world."

"O Thou, who cravest madly for knowledge, who understandest a little of everything, learn wisdom from the bees if not from the ants. The bee continuously goes to new flowers, leaving one to sit on another, but it only takes from one what it needs and returns to the hive therewith. Similarly, thou shouldst not care for strange words and the various volumes of diverse works, not leave one flower for another as do those who feel bored, who always open new books, perusing their pages, noting the words, but never attaining knowledge. But take from one only what thou needest and deposit it in the bee-hive of thy memory. For, as the philosopher says, a plant that is transplanted too often does not become strong, and there is nothing useful that can be of any profit if only just superficially taken note of."

"The wisdom of the world is to cover the heart with subtleties, to veil the true sense of expressions, to show the false to

be true and the true to be false. This wisdom is learnt by the young by habit and is paid for in order that the children might be instructed therein. Whoever possesses it struts proudly about and despises the others. Whoever does not have it shows himself timid and subdued. He who holds it is in great esteem, him it teaches to seek the very summit of honours, to enjoy the vanity of mundane life, to pay back evil with greater evil, if this be possible, and not to stop at any obstacle ; and if it so happen that one's strength fails one in a certain case, to simulate peaceful goodness and naturalness and thereby to attain what could not be gained by violence. This is wisdom full of vanity and misery. The wisdom of the righteous is not to make a show of anything, to speak what he thinks, to love truth and to flee from falsehood, to approve of what is good and rather to suffer evil than to commit it, to do wrong to no one, but to suffer it with great gladness for the sake of Truth. This is true and holy wisdom and worthy of eternal bliss."

Among the innumerable miracles attributed to S. Antonio there is even a very curious story of his having gone to India and especially to Bengal after his passing away, to preach there the message of Christ in its true meaning and purport. Even granted that S. Antonio possessed miraculous powers to an unusual extent, there is no doubt that many of his miracles belong to the realm of legend and are golden strands woven into the marvellous pattern of his life by the loving memory and unflagging devotion of the people and of his own brethren. When coming across such stories in Christian literature and books of devotion, one should never lose sight of the fact that the outgoing Western mind always finds in the miraculous the greatest proof of the grace of God and the high spiritual attainments of a certain person, and that in the beatification of any man

the miracles he is said to have performed before or after his death form a very important factor. And it is to be regretted that most miracles performed by Western saints are of so highly a material nature that they rather served to veil the spiritual essence of the Divine to the eyes of the people than to reveal it.

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Slowly the dusk deepens and the play of the candle-light on the walls of the little side-chapel becomes brighter and brighter, while one after another the devotees salute the altar in deep reverence and quietly make their way to one of the principal portals of the great Basilica. And the more deserted the sanctuary becomes the more the solitude and stillness in-

crease, the greater and more sublime grows the intensity of Love and Holiness and Beauty reigning there and meditating on the good and the liberation of all those who are in the dark, in the barren wastes of moral desolation and worldly pleasures and in the gloom of ignorance, which separate them from the ultimate and unchanging values of life. The experience of this living Presence of Holiness sinks deep into the heart of the visitor who has prepared himself to receive it, and for a time cuts him off from all that is vile and low in him, filling him with a great radiance of beauty and detachment and deep inner peacefulness, so that only thankfulness and love remain in his heart and bring him nearer to the Divine.

A LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

By Jean Herbert

[The following is an interesting letter relating to the activities of Swami Siddheswarananda in Europe. We thought it good to share this letter with our readers as it gives one an idea of the pioneering work that is now being done to present the teachings of Vedanta to non-English speaking peoples of Europe in their own language. Monsieur Jean Herbert, the writer of this letter, is connected with the League of Nations, and is an important figure in French public life. He is a great lover of Indian culture, and is the translator of Swami Vivekananda's works into French.]

MY DEAR SWAMI,

I know that some of you have been rather wondering at not receiving much news about the activities of Swami Siddheswarananda since he came to Europe. I am fully aware of the great sacrifice which it meant for the Mission to send us one of your most capable men whom you entrusted with great responsibilities in India, and it is quite natural that you should have wondered whether that sacrifice was in fact justified.

As a matter of fact, we intentionally arranged things in such a way that the Swami should have as little activity as possible during the first seven or eight months of his stay in France. It is absolutely necessary for his work that he should have a thorough command of the French language, since trying to get into touch with French people without speaking their language would be just as Utopian as wanting to teach philosophy in Calcutta in Telugu or Kanarese. We

felt, however, that as soon as people began to come to him, all his time would be taken up and he would not be able to pursue his study of the language. In spite of our efforts, a number of people came to him individually and he even had to take up work with a few groups in and around Paris.¹

I am glad to say that Swami Siddheswarananda has now reached a point when he can read the most difficult French text with perfect ease, also read manuscript letters which have been sent to him in French, and that he can understand what is being said in French with very little difficulty. As regards talking, he is now able to handle private interviews and conversations without any outside help whatever, which is the most crucial point. He does not yet feel able to address large audiences or to write articles or even letters in French, but this is not so important and it will come quite naturally in the course of time.

¹ Although this report is not intended to cover the activities of the Swami in France, but only—by way of illustration—to give a short picture of what he did during a recent visit to Switzerland, it may be of interest to the readers to know that during the last four months the Swami has been directing the meditation classes of an important spiritual institution in Paris, the Buddhist Society. Under the auspices of that society, he spoke on March 21st., before a very large audience, on 'Philosophical Implications of the Phenomena of Dreams.' In November, he had addressed another important group on the Message of Sri Ramakrishna. For the last two months, the Swami has also given help to a group which meets alternately in Paris and Versailles. He has now begun to give them talks on the 'Bhagavad Gita', followed by a class for meditation.

When we realised that he had reached this point, we thought we would give him an opportunity of tackling a comparatively small centre and trying his hand there before starting any work on a large scale in Paris. For that reason we suggested that he should come to spend a couple of weeks in Geneva² and we arranged a full-time programme for him. The Swami very kindly consented and arrived in Geneva on the 27th of March. He remained here until the 11th of April with the exception of three days which he spent in Lausanne and Villeneuve. On his way back to Paris he stopped in Lyons for one day.

Before I mention in any detail the work which he did in Geneva during that fortnight, I should like to say that he made a most profound impression on all the people who came into touch with him. He showed himself perfectly able to meet each and every person on his or her own ground, giving each one the precise help and inspiration which happened to be wanted and appropriate. He met people of all professions, social strata, religious beliefs, etc. As it was not possible in the short span of time at our disposal to arrange private interviews with all the people who wanted to see him, we had a number of small group meetings to discuss various topics.

On two separate evenings we had talks and discussions on the most abstract metaphysical questions. The people who attended were University professors, professional psychologists, physiologists and leaders of various

² The Swami had come once before, but only for a couple of days, to establish contact with a few people deeply interested.

spiritualistic and educational movements in Geneva. On the first of those evenings, the Swami spoke for about an hour on the Vedantic approach to Philosophy, and on the second on the doctrine of Love, Predestination and Grace. Each of those talks was followed by an extremely keen discussion in which a number of people took part. The Swami was able to reply to all the questions in such a way as to command the deepest respect and admiration from all present, and even from those who held views entirely different from his. The professors and the psychologists were very much interested to see the presentation from two separate and distinct standpoints, one of pure philosophy and the other of religion. In those discussions, as well as in all those that followed, those view-points were clearly kept separate, and therefore there could not arise any confusion of issues. The French mind, which is so particular about the logic of a presentation, felt perfectly satisfied, as no fallacy could be discovered, reason and emotion being allotted their proper places in the pursuit of Truth.

The interest which people took appears clearly from the fact that it was nearly midnight when we had to suggest it was time to adjourn, and also from the other fact that practically every one of those present made a special request to be invited again during the next visit of the Swami to Geneva.

Two other evenings were devoted to the general principles of Raja Yoga and practical meditation. The people who attended were not so intellectually-minded as the other group, but had been selected because of their

special practical interest in the subject. There also the Swami began by a talk which was followed by a large number of questions and answers, and the evening closed with a methodically arranged and beautifully explained 'meditation', from which all present drew great inspiration. The enthusiasm shown was testified by the fact that a large number of the people who came asked the Swami to give them individual teaching for spiritual practices.

On two other evenings, the Swami led the discussion, study and meditation in a group which has been meeting regularly in Geneva once a week during the last two years, to study the works of Swami Vivekananda. Most members of that group had already the privilege of instruction from Swami Yatiswarananda, and were now most grateful to have a teacher with whom they could freely converse in their own language. I may mention that on the weekly meetings which followed the visit of the Swami, everybody showed an extremely keen desire to have Swami Siddheswarananda come again as soon as possible for a longer stay, when he could devote much more time for individual instruction.

In the course of another meeting which took place at the house of some other friends, the Swami spoke on the Hindu view of Christ. One prominent clergyman and several very active members of the Oxford Group were present and a great many questions were asked. The meeting lasted about three hours and would certainly have lasted much longer, if another meeting had not been arranged for the same evening. There also several of the people present asked for pri-

vate interviews either for themselves individually or for small groups of their family or of their friends.

Although we took great care that the Swami during this first visit should not be identified with any group already existing in Geneva, we found it impossible to refuse an invitation which was extended to him to speak in a small group devoted to spiritual research. The Swami spoke on spiritual life in modern India with special reference to some of the most famous matters of the last hundred years. A number of questions were also asked after the lecture and answered to the satisfaction of all present.

The Swami also addressed a fairly large meeting in a famous international school near Geneva. He spoke on the ideal in education and had a number of private talks with various members of the staff and other people.

Two other meetings, one in the evening and one in the afternoon, were devoted to a discussion of the 'Psychological Approach to Reality' with a few professional philosophers professors and practitioners.

In Nyons, a small town half-way between Lausanne and Geneva, the Swami spent the better part of a day with some prominent members of the medical profession and members of their family.

While in Lausanne, the Swami spoke in public on two successive evenings. On the first one, I had asked him to take my place in a series of lectures I was delivering on the various Yogas. The subject for that evening was Jnana-Yoga and the Swami spoke with great inspiration. Some people very deeply versed in Buddhistic and Vedantic scriptures

asked him a number of highly technical questions which he answered with perfect ease and great mastery of the subject. On the next evening he spoke in the Temple of the Rosicrucians on practical meditation and the evening ended with actual collective meditation in a remarkably serene atmosphere.

In addition to all those public functions, the Swami gave private interviews to a large number of individuals or small groups and his timetable was so arranged that he had an average of half a dozen of such appointments on each day. In order to enable him to have talks with more people, it was arranged that he should meet one or two practically every day for lunch or for dinner. Some of the people he met (professors, psychologists, etc.) had travelled very long distances by rail to have the opportunity of a talk with him.

One interview which is worth relating in greater detail is the one which the Swami had with Romain Rolland and his sister. It was a great day indeed for them all, and Romain Rolland, in spite of his advancing years and of the considerable amount of work which he has to do, had set aside a whole afternoon for that meeting. The Swami was very deeply moved at meeting the man who first broadcasted the names of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in the West and to whose books can be traced the interest of 99 per cent. of the people who now study the teachings of those two great masters in the West. Romain Rolland, on the other hand, was overjoyed at being able to converse for the first time in his life, with one of the spiritual children of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda with-

out the help of an interpreter. He welcomed the Swami like a long-lost son, and the feelings shown by the Swami were certainly very much akin to filial love. I suppose it will not be an indiscretion on my part to mention that Romain Rolland and his sister in a letter sent to me on the next day expressed the unqualified opinion that the Swami was certainly the very best man possible to bring the actual teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda to French-speaking countries.

During the day which the Swami spent in Lyons on the way back to Paris, two small group meetings were arranged, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. Each lasted for several hours and was a continual exchange of questions and answers on the Vedantic view of all sorts of subjects. The people in Lyons were most grateful for the visit of the Swami and expressed the great desire that during his next trip to Switzerland he should stop in their city for several days.

I feel I cannot close this letter without paying a tribute to the admirable selfless work which has been done in

many parts of Europe and more particularly in Switzerland and in Paris by the Swami Yatiswarananda. Although Swami Yatiswarananda has now commissioned Swami Siddheswarananda to attend to France and to other French-speaking countries, so as to devote all his activities to other parts of Europe where he is very much wanted, it should not be forgotten that it is largely due to his exertions and efforts that the way was open for Swami Siddheswarananda.³ If it had not been for Swami Yatiswarananda's impressive personality which commanded respect and admiration from everyone with whom he came into touch, there would certainly not have been in Geneva to-day about one hundred persons who wished to receive individual instruction or to elucidate difficult points in the teachings of Vedanta.⁴ May the work of Swami Yatiswarananda, unostentatious as it is, be as successful in other countries as it has been in Switzerland.

Geneva, } (Sd.) JEAN HERBERT
26-4-'38

³Swami Siddheswarananda has often expressed his gratitude that in this distant part of the world he should enjoy the personal guidance and advice of Swami Yatiswarananda, a distinguished senior monk of the Order.

⁴It is also worthwhile to record the considerable influence of "Action et Pensee", a French philosophical magazine devoted

to psychological research and practice, under the editorship of Professor Baudouin, of the University of Geneva. For the last year, one half of that magazine has been exclusively reserved to "Modern Hindu Philosophy" under the sub-editorship of M. Herbert, and has published a large number of translations from great modern Indian Masters.

PURITY AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, formerly Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is at present teaching the principles of Vedanta in different countries of Central Europe. The following are the notes of his class talks at Wiesbaden, Germany, on the basis of 'The Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda'. Instalments of these talks will be a regular feature of the *Vedanta Kesari* for some time.]

IN spiritual life, although you cut off your personal relations with others to a great extent, you come to have wider love and sympathy.

If some other person attracts you, just direct the mind into some higher channels, create higher attractions, and you may even for the time being create in yourself some dislike or disgust for the person in question, so that that person loses all charm for you. Later on this disgust can be effaced so that you can look at that person with the same indifference as a stranger you have never known.

When one finds something higher, the lower automatically loses its attraction and is put aside.

In the beginning of our spiritual life we have to create our own images, but these are always images of which the pattern is right, i.e., imaginations of something that is real, not of something wholly imaginary.

Some stress the sense of the Presence more than the sense of the form, although they, too, call up the form. The same Being permeates both the form called up and the devotee as his own eternal being.

Just think that your whole heart or head is permeated with the Divine Effulgence, and that this Light is part of the Infinite Light that pervades everything. Melt away your whole

personality, your I-ness, into That. Melt away your body, your mind, your senses, your emotions, into That. Just imagine this very vividly. And then this infinite ocean of Light takes shape, as part of this Light becomes solidified in the form of your Ishtam (chosen Deity). But never lose sight of the Infinite background, of which your Ishtam and you yourself as well as all others are parts, and which permeates all these. The ocean, the One Eternal Principle, lying at the back of both of you yourself and the whole universe, must never be lost sight of, because it is That which will be realised by you one day.

In this form of meditation the One becomes two, as it were, i.e., the Infinite Light becomes solidified into the object of worship and the worshipper.

Why love these petty miserable dolls, these small human idols of flesh and blood? If you really want to love, love the Ideal or the Divine, but not these puny ephemeral human forms.

Once a king was asked to lead a good life, but when he tried he naturally found it very hard, and was asked to practise also a little restriction in food. But he found that the holy man who was giving him all these instructions was taking very hot food. "How is it possible for you to eat all this hot stuff, and at the same

time to maintain your mental balance?" asked the king. The holy man replied, "I always have before me the thought of Death, and it is this that exerts a great influence on me."

We should practise a certain amount of control and discrimination regarding the food we take, but so long as we are in the body, the body must be properly taken care of and nourished to keep it a fit instrument for the realisation of the Divine and for the Divine's work. There is much more body-consciousness in the person who is ill or weak than in the perfectly healthy and normal person. And we have to see that our body-consciousness is reduced to a minimum if we want to make good progress in spiritual life.

So long as we allow the love for the world to dwell in our hearts and continue to cherish them, Divine love can never be born.

Unless our mind be to some extent pure and non-attached and prepared for renunciation, we can never even think of God-realisation. Try to purify your body, to purify your heart, to purify your mind as much as possible. Then the blazing fire of spiritual realisation will burn away all desires.

Banish all worldly thoughts with an effort of the will and with great sincerity, consciously and purposefully; and fix your mind on the Divine. One who does not lead a pure life and is not disciplined ought never to receive this instruction, because meditation becomes dangerous in the case of a person who is not properly prepared and has not gone through the proper preliminary training. Only one who has passed through tremend-

ous training and ethical discipline can have true self-surrender.

You must never associate too freely with people, and must always use discrimination. Once Sri Ramakrishna told Swamiji not to associate so much with Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great Bengali dramatist and actor. He said, "A cup in which garlic had been kept for a long time would still have some of the smell adhering to it even when it is well washed and cleaned." On hearing this from some other devotees, Girish felt very sad at heart and went to the Master to ask him about it. He asked, "Sir, what can I do to get rid of this smell?" And Sri Ramakrishna answered, "You have lit such a tremendous fire of Divine love in you that everything is burnt to ashes." Girish: "I heard you spoke in this strain, but bless me, that this garlic smell may go away." Sri Ramakrishna, "You have lighted such fire of devotion, and this will burn away all smell. No smell of your past life can cling to you." Afterwards Girish Chandra Ghosh said, "The Lord has taken away all my vices."

Only one who has really passed through strenuous self-effort can give up and surrender himself wholly and unconditionally at the feet of the Divine. Self-surrender can only come when our wings are dead-tired like those of the bird sitting on the ship's mast.

All forms of striving make the mind pure and fit for the Divine touch. And self-surrender can only be accomplished after having gone through one's spiritual practice with great perseverance and doggedness.

Too much activity is very dangerous, because it usually becomes the

aimless activity of the monkey. What for? Nobody knows. This kind of activity is just restlessness and nothing more. But then you find a form of self-surrender, so-called self-surrender, which is nothing more than inertness, indolence, lethargy. And this is just as bad as aimless activity; perhaps worse.

Most people are so active, because they are terribly afraid to be left to themselves. They work and work and work, and go to cinemas and parties and theatres, read heaps and heaps of books. What for? Just to keep themselves busy, just to divert their minds from themselves.

The true aspirant should always try to combine both: activity of the right kind, and self-surrender.

Self-realisation is the ultimate goal and the ideal. And there must be an amount of asceticism, just as there must be perfect continence, Brahmacharya; otherwise the mind will be drawn away by the senses and become more and more outgoing and sense-bound. We must have only one centre of consciousness if we really wish to progress in spiritual life. Spiritual life without continence, Brahmacharya, is not possible, whatever some people may say. You cannot lose your body-consciousness without disciplining and subduing the body and its cravings.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

SUTRAS 16 TO 20.

In the next three Sutras Narada presents to us the views of three ancient Acharyas regarding the characteristics of Bhakti. On a careful perusal, it can be seen that these three views are selected because they represent three types of expression of Love in deed, word, and mind. The three views are not mutually contradictory and exclusive, but may be taken as supplementing each other.

SUTRA 16.

पूजादिषु अद्वाराः इति पारमार्थ्यः ।

पूजादिषु in acts of worship and the like अद्वाराः devotion इति thus

पारमार्थ्यः Vyasa, the son of Parasara.

16. Vyasa,¹ the son of Parasara, is of opinion that Bhakti expresses itself in devotion² to acts³ of worship and the like.⁴

Note 1. Vyasa.—It is not clear where Vyasa's view is represented as above; for it is Vyasa who has given us in his Itihasas and Puranas a complete description not only of this, but of all the various aspects of Bhakti. Perhaps it may be due to the fact that before he met Narada and was initiated by him into Bhakti, he used to

emphasise the dynamic aspect of spiritual life as in the Mahabharata. Even in the Bhagavatam, the scripture of Bhakti *par excellence*, the Bhaktas are delineated by him as living an intensely active life of worship and social usefulness.

2. *Devotion*—The word Anuraga ordinarily means only mere love, but in Bhakti scriptures it means the love that arises out of the recognition of the divinity and glory of the object of love, viz., God. Cf. Swapneswara's commentary on the second Sutra of Sandilya.

3. *Acts of worship*—Technically worship means all those activities, mental as well as physical, undertaken for satisfying a superior being on whom one is dependant, and for whom one feels a kind of reverence. It is a phenomenon, characteristic of all religions. It includes all kinds of rituals and ceremonies which are symbolic expressions of religious emotion. There is a general belief that formal worship is characteristic of only the first stages of Bhakti. But Narada here quotes the authority of Vyasa to show that worship may be continued even after realisation. Witness for example how all the Acharyas such as Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhwa, Gouranga, Ramakrishna and others engaged themselves in worship even after their realisation. In fact it is only the realised man's worship that really deserves the name, as it is only he who has a full vision of the glory of the Lord whom he worships, and it is only he who can worship Him with his whole heart and soul untainted by the ego.

4. *The like*—Refers to sacred dance, celebration of festivals, build-

ing and renovation of temples, social service, acts of charity, works of art such as painting and sculpture etc.

SUTRA 17.

कथादिषु इति गर्गः ।

कथादिषु in sacred talk and the like इति thus. गर्गः the sage Garga.

17. The sage Garga thinks that it expresses itself in devotion to 'sacred'¹ talk and the like.²

Note 1. The sacred talk—Lovers always like to talk about the objects of their love.

2. *The like*—includes all verbal expression such as prayer, japa, Stotras, study and exposition of scriptures, lectures on spiritual topics, Harikathas, Sankirtanams, composition of songs and other poetical and theological literature. While external activities of the Bhakta are helpful to others by way of example, the verbal expressions provide help by way of precept also.

Thus the Gita X:9 says, "With their hearts fixed on Me, with their life absorbed in Me, they are contented and rejoice." Bhagavatam X:14 again says, "Which man other than a butcher, would feel reluctant to listen again and again to the recital of the excellent attributes of the most glorious Lord, constantly sung by persons free from desires?" Witness the example of Narada. He always goes about singing the glories of the Lord in mad ecstasy. Witness again how Vyasa and Valmiki and Tulasidas composed the epics under the inspiration of Bhakti. Witness also the songs of the Alvars, Mirabai.

Kabir, Tukaram and the host of other Bhaktas of Bengal like Jayadeva. Parikshit delighted himself in listening to the glories of the Lord recited by Suka. Sri Ramakrishna and Gouranga immersed themselves in Sankirtan. Sri Suka says in the Bhagavatam X:1.16, "Enquiry about the Lord Vasudeva's stories purifies three people—him that describes, him that enquires and him that listens." Bhishma thinks that the singing of hymns is the best of all Dharmas. (Vide Sahasranama). Even in the Rig Veda we read, "O glorious all-pervading Lord, we worship you by mere repetition of your name." The Mantra occurs also in the Yajurveda. The Bhagavan himself says that He is the Jpayajna among all Yajnas.

SŪTRA 18.

आत्मरत्यविरोधेनेति शाण्डिल्यः ।

आत्मरत्यविरोधेन without prejudice to the delight in Atman (Self) इति thus शाण्डिल्यः the sage Sandilya.

18. The sage Sandilya insists that it must be without prejudice to the delight in the Atman (Self).

Sandilya probably seems to think of the danger of mere physical and verbal expressions which are possible even without the proper mental background of delight in Self. He therefore wants us not to take every such expression as in itself being a characteristic of Bhakti. Bhakti is more mental than physical or verbal, and only in so far as the physical or verbal expression is prompted by the fullness of heart it deserves to be considered as a characteristic of Bhakti.

SŪTRA 19.

नारदस्तु तदर्पिताखिलाचरता तद्विस्मरणे
परमव्याकुलतेति ।

तु but तदर्पिताखिलाचरता the consecration of all activities by complete self-surrender to him तद्विस्मरणे if He were to be forgotten परमव्याकुलता extreme anguish इति thus नारदः the sage Narada.

19. But¹ Narada is of opinion that the essential characteristics of Bhakti are the consecration of all activities² by complete self-surrender³ to Him and extreme anguish⁴ if He were to be forgotten.

Note. 1. But—This is to draw our attention to the difference in view.

2. All activities.—This implies that Narada does not narrow down the life of the Bhakta to rituals, chanting sacred 'Namas' and similar activities that are strictly called devotional.

3. Complete self-surrender.—This inward attitude is the prime characteristic of Bhakti; and every action done with this attitude has a due place in devotional life. For self-surrender is only another name for the effacement of the ego, and any work that helps this has a place in spiritual life.

4. Extreme anguish—Extremes always meet, the Bhaktas feel a great delight when they reach the stage of realisation when the slightest forgetfulness brings the pangs of separation, and consider that as the highest culmination of Bhakti.

5. *If He were to be forgotten.*—

It is not possible for a realised man to forget God at any time. This is therefore meant to show that there is no possibility of forgetting Him as the mind is automatically prevented from such forgetfulness by the anguish which it would have to feel if he were to forget Him.

SUTRA 20.

अस्त्येवमेवम् ।

एवमेवम् thus and thus अस्ति does exist.

20. Examples do exist, indeed, of such perfect expression of Bhakti.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Life and Teachings of Zoraster : By Dewan Bahadur T. Bhujanga Rao. To be had of the Manager, Ramakrishna Ashram, Basavanugudi, Bangalore. Pages 32. Price annas 4.

This is a very lucid presentation of Zoroastrianism in all its aspects. The Hindu reader will find it specially useful because it brings out the affinity between the religion of ancient Iran and Hinduism represented in the Veda.

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An Eight-hundred Year old Book of Indian Medicine and Formulas : By Elizabeth Sharpe. Published by Luzac & Co., 46, Great Russell Street, W.C. 1., London. Pages 135.

This book is described as a translation from a very old manuscript in a peculiar form of Hindi, supposed to have been written by a pupil of the great Jain priest Hemchandra. It gives a very large number of recipes for the cure of many forms of diseases. Of course no one can vouch for their actual medicinal value.

Sri Ramakrishna : By Subodh Chandra Dey, B.A., (Bengali). Price Rs. 2. Pp. 430. Copies can be had of the author c/o Ramakrishna Math, P.O. Wari Dacca.

This nicely got up and handy biography of Sri Ramakrishna written in elegant Bengali prose, bringing out with essential details and reflections the master's great character as revealed through his unparalleled spiritual discipline, realizations and message, is not redundant, although other larger and smaller works already exist on the subject. An orderly presentation with the available

details regarding the relation which large number of disciples and admirers had with the Master, form distinguishing feature of this volume. We recommend with pleasure this publication to the Bengali knowing readers.

*

Personal Memoirs of H. P. Blavatsky : Compiled by Mary K. Neff. Published by Rider & Co., 34, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Pages 323. Price sh. 18.

The compiler of this work is to be congratulated for the very successful way in which she has been able to produce what is virtually an autobiography of the celebrated founder of the Theosophical Movement, nearly forty-five years after her death. For, but for connecting links and critical remarks here and there, the larger portion of this book consists of extracts from the letters, conversations, etc., of Madam Blavatsky, together with confirmatory evidence of the events referred to in them from the writings and utterances of contemporaries of Blavatsky and the chief associates in her life and work. Besides utilising materials already published, the compiler has incorporated a very large body of hitherto unpublished materials from the archives of the Theosophical Society. The book has therefore the appearance of a full-dressed autobiography and one can follow in it the life of Madam Blavatsky in her own words almost from year to year. One gets also details of her life prior to the formation of the Theosophical society. Besides being an admirable production from the literary point of view, the work will be of much interest to occultists too. The book also contains twelve excellent illustrations.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Ramakrishna Math and Mission

We are requested to announce that Srimat Swami Suddhananda has been appointed President, Srimat Swami Virajananda Vice-President, and Swami Madhavananda Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. These changes have been necessitated by the passing away of Srimat Swami Vijnanananda, the late President.

The Ramakrishna Mission 29th Annual General Meeting

Progress of Work in 1937 : The 29th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held on Good Friday at the premises of the Belur Math, the Headquarters of the Mission, with Swami Madhavananda in the chair. A large number of monastic and lay members were present. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and passed. Srimat Swami Virajananda, the Secretary, then presented the report for the year 1937. The following extracts from it clearly indicate the progress of the work done by the Mission exclusive of the work done by the Ramakrishna Math and its branches in India and the centres in N. and S. America, England and Europe.

Centres : There are at present 100 centres of the Math and Mission in India and abroad. At the end of 1937, the total number of centres of the Mission in India, Burma, Ceylon and Straits Settlements was 48.

Activities : The Mission conducted both Temporary Relief and Permanent Work. Temporary Relief Work was done in times of distress caused by flood, fire and small-pox in Puri and Bankura Districts.

Philanthropic : 29 out of the 48 centres conducted one or more of three kinds of work, viz., Indoor Hospital Work, Outdoor Dispensary Work and Regular and Occasional Service of various kinds.

In all there are 7 Indoor hospitals including the Maternity Hospital and Child Welfare Centre at Bhowanipore, Calcutta, and there are 30 Dispensaries including the Tuberculosis Dispensary at New Delhi. The philanthropic centres are flung in different parts of India, and some of them are situated in Benares, Hardwar, Brindaban, Allah-

bad and other places of pilgrimage, and in cosmopolitan cities and towns such as Rangoon, Bombay, Cawnpore and Lucknow. The Sevashrama at Benares is the most prominent. The Rangoon centre treated 2,39,369 cases in 1937.

Philanthropic work was done also by rural centres such as Bhubaneswar in Orissa, Jairambati in Bankura and Sargachi in Murshidabad.

The Indoor Hospitals treated 9,007 patients in 1937, as against 7,707 in 1936. The Outdoor Dispensaries at the Headquarters and branch centres treated 11,37,794 cases as against 10,29,349 in 1936, the new and the repeated cases being in the proportion of 2 to 3 nearly.

Regular and Occasional Service of various kinds was done by 30 centres.

Educational : The Educational Work of the Mission falls mainly into two divisions, viz., (1) Boys' Schools, Girls' Schools and Mixed Schools, the classes ranging from the Matriculation standard to the Primary, as well as Night Schools, Adult Schools and Industrial Schools ; (2) Students' Homes, Hostels and Orphanages.

Mass education for adults and juveniles through Day and Night Schools formed a feature as usual.

Out of the 48 centres 34 conducted some type of educational work or other. In all the centres together there were 19 Students' Home, 4 Orphanages, 3 Residential High Schools, 6 High Schools, 4 M. E. Schools and 3 Industrial Schools. The total strength of these 96 institutions in India, Ceylon and Straits Settlements was 8,250 in 1937.

Rural educational work was done by such centres as Sarisha near Diamond Harbour, Contai in Midnapore, Habiganj and Sylhet in Assam. The centre at Sarisha has nearly 500 boys and girls in its schools.

The Industrial Schools taught one or more of the arts, crafts and industries which may be grouped under the following heads : (1) Mechanical and Automobile Engineering, (2) Spinning, weaving, dyeing, calicoprinting and tailoring, (3) Cane-work, (4) Carpentry, Cabinet-making, (5) Shoe-making. In the Industrial School at Madras the Mechanical and

Automobile Engineering course covers a period of five years and is recognised by the Government. The centre at Habiganj conducts two shoe-factories to provide better training to the cobbler boys of the locality, and runs two Co-operative Societies for the benefit of the cobblers.

The Sister Nivedita Girls' High School at Calcutta had 529 girls in 1937. The educational centre at Madras is the largest. It had 1,784 pupils in 1937, in all its institutions. The Mission Residential High Schools at Deoghar and Perianaikenpalayam (Coimbatore), and the Students' Home at Dum Dum near Calcutta also did valuable work.

Libraries & Reading Rooms : There were more than 55 Libraries and as many Reading Rooms in the Mission centres. The Mission Society at Rangoon did excellent library work and had an attendance of over 34,000 in its reading rooms in 1937. The Students' Home at Madras had more than 21,000 volumes in all its libraries. The total number of books in the Mission centres may be roughly computed to be over 65,000 in the year under review.

Missionary : The monastic members went on propaganda tours in India and abroad. A Swami was deputed on invitation to Fiji, and another to Paris, where they did successful preaching work. The teachings of the Vedanta as interpreted by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were disseminated chiefly through the English periodicals—the *Prabuddha Bharata* (Mayavati), the *Vedanta Kesari* (Madras), the *Message of the East* (Boston), the *Vedanta* (Switzerland) and the *Voice of India* (Hollywood) and through the *Udbodhan* in Bengali and *Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam* in Tamil, as well as through translations of the Sanskrit scriptures, and the publications of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature in English and some Continental languages.

More than 2,500 classes were held and more than 250 meetings convened during the year under review.

There are colonies for the Harijans and other backward classes conducted in Trichur

(Cochin), Shella (Khasia Hills) and other places by the monks of the Mission.

Expenditure : The total expenditure for the Mission work in 1937 was Rs. 5,74,963-3-5.

The Ideal of Service : Swami Vivekananda, the Founder of the Mission, sounded the clarion call for self-dedication and service of humanity, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. Such a noble ideal alone is capable of giving peace and light in the world to-day with its clash and conflict, darkness and despair. "Will not the young men of India respond to the call ?

Mahasamadhi

Srimat Swami Nirmalanandaji Maharaj passed away on April 26th at Ottapalam in the Malabar District, at the age of about 72.

In his early life, the Swami was known as Tulsi Charan Dutt, and was the son of Deva Nath Dutt, belonging to a well-known Datta family of Bosepara in Baghbazaar. While he was young, he had the good fortune to meet Sri Ramakrishna at the residence of Balaram Bose at Baghbazaar. After the Master's demise he joined the Baranagore Math, and was thenceforth known by the name, Swami Nirmalananda. He was much loved by Swami Vivekananda. He was sent in 1903 to America to assist Swami Abhedananda in his work there. In 1906 he returned from America and spent the following few years in pilgrimage and spiritual practices in various holy places of North India. In 1909 he was sent by the Belur Math to assist Swami Ramakrishnananda in carrying on the work in the Ashram at Bangalore, which the latter had started. For over 20 years he was the president of Bangalore Math, during which time he spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna in various places in South India and established monasteries in Kerala. He was an effective speaker and possessed an undaunted spirit. He leaves behind him a large number of devotees and disciples. His sad demise has been the cause of sorrow for many.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXV]

JULY, 1938

[No. 3

HINDU ETHICS

अग्नेः शीतेन तोयस्य तृषा भक्तस्य च क्षुधा । क्रियते सुखकर्तृत्वं तद्विलोमस्य चेतारैः ॥
यावत् कुरुते जन्तुः संबन्धान् मनसः प्रियात् । तावन्तोऽस्य निखन्यन्ते हृदये शोकशङ्खवः ॥
यद्यद् गृहे तन्मनसि यत्र तत्रावतिष्ठतः । नागदाहोपकरणं तस्य तत्रैव तिष्ठति ॥
गर्भेषु सुखलेशोऽपि भवद्भिरनुमीयते । यदि तत् कथ्यतः सर्वे दुःखमयं जगत् ॥
बाल्ये क्रीडनकासक्ताः यौवने विषयोन्मूखाः । अज्ञा नयन्त्यशक्त्या च वार्धक्यं समुपस्थितम् ॥
तस्माद् बाल्ये विवेकात्मा यनेन श्रेयसे सदा । बाल्ययौवनवृद्धाद्यैर्देहभावैरसंयुतः ॥
तदेतदतिदुःखानामास्पदेऽन्नभवाणं च । भवतां कथ्यते सत्यं विष्णुरेकः परायणः ॥
प्रयासः स्मरणे कोऽस्य स्मृतो यत्कति शोभनं । पापक्षयश्च भवति स्मरतां तमहर्निशम् ॥

When we are exposed to cold and thirst and hunger, we conceive fire, water and food as the destroyers of these unpleasant sensations, and conversely when we are harassed by heat, etc., we long for cold, etc. As long as a person contracts pleasure-giving relations, so long he is driving the nail of sorrow into his heart. Whatever possessions a person has at home, he carries them in his heart (through attachment) wherever he goes; and in whichever place he happens to be, not only those materials but even their ideas present in the mind becomes the cause of loss and anxiety. Could you have ever inferred about the existence of the least degree of happiness during your life in the womb? Tell me. The whole universe is soaked in sorrow. In boyhood playthings alone attract; in youth one longs for sense-pleasures; and when old age is at hand ignorant people pass through it helplessly. So from boyhood, one should, with a discriminating mind, always endeavour for spiritual welfare without allowing oneself to be carried away by these inclinations of the body. In this veil of tears, I may tell you, the Lord alone is the only resort. Is it difficult to remember Him? And when remembered, He vouchsafes the good. Moreover by remembering Him day and night, all sins are destroyed.

Vishnu Purana.

WHAT IS MAYA ?

[In the course of this year we shall be publishing a series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna's views on the fundamental problems of philosophy and spiritual life. This is the second of the series. In the present article, dealing with the doctrine of Maya, we have not made any direct reference to the Master's teachings. We have confined ourselves to a general consideration of the doctrine, so as to serve as a preliminary for the study of the Master's teachings on the point in the next issue.]

I

FOR many in India, the word 'Maya' stands for the quintessence of philosophic wisdom. For many others, it is a password for heresy and impiety. For still others, especially our foreign critics, it signifies the visionary nature of the Indian mind—its incapacity to grapple with the hard realities of life. But Maya is such an incurable habit of thought that willy-nilly every one ultimately succumbs to it in some measure, except of course the man who accepts the life of the senses as self-sufficient and feels supremely satisfied with it.

But the world in which we live is such that a feeling of self-sufficiency and satisfaction with regard to it is not possible for all. And even those who are satisfied at one period of their life with the security offered by the world, feel dissatisfied with it afterwards. When one gets a vivid sense of death threatening practically to nullify the whole of a life's achievement in the twinkling of the eye, or of a disastrous war sweeping away a whole civilisation from the face of the earth, one cannot help instituting a thorough enquiry into the nature of the values cherished by the sense-bound mind. If this enquiry is carried on to its limits, one will be led unawares into the realm of Maya.

For in a spiritual sense, Maya essentially stands for an attitude towards the world that comes upon a mind at a certain state of maturity. This state can be analysed into the following conditions : In the first place it implies a poignant feeling of the fleeting and trivial nature of the values realisable in the world—that they are relative by nature, are sordid at their lower levels, and are utterly inadequate to approximate to the ideals we cherish. In the next place it implies a faith, a conviction that in spite of all these, the world and life in it are not mere accidents without an ultimate meaning and purpose, that even from, and through, this imperfect and changeful world, the individual can reach a state of awareness in which he discovers, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that his ideas of highest truth and good in terms of what is felt as the noblest and the most developed in the sanctuary of his heart, are not mere illusions but the basic reality of things. An attitude of mind carrying with it these two mutually dependent implications, constitutes the pre-supposition of true religious life everywhere. With the first appearance of this attitude man steps on the fringes of Maya's domain.

II

It may be asked 'how', by those who abhor the doctrine of Maya as a

theory teaching the illusoriness of the world. Before answering this, it is necessary to say what the so-called illusionists mean by the expression *Maya*. They think that 'real' and 'unreal' are not contradictory terms, but only contraries with a middle ground between them. At one end stands the absolutely unreal or fictitious entities like 'horn of a hare' and 'barren woman's son'. These are mere words the contents of which can never possibly fall within any one's experience. At the other end stands Brahman, the absolutely real, which can never be negated by anything. Between these two extremes, there are two levels, forming a middle ground, as it were, which thought cannot exclusively classify with either of them.

The first of these categories is experiences of the dream, and those caused by errors of perception like a rope mistaken for a snake, or a sandy desert for a watery expanse in the phenomenon called mirage. At the time of perception these phenomena appear absolutely real, and as far as the perceiver is concerned, for the moment they are *there*. But when the error is dispelled by right knowledge, the illusion disappears totally, or even if the appearance of it persists owing to a combination of circumstances, it no longer deceives the perceiver—*i.e.*, the rope-snake does not frighten him, nor does the water of the mirage delude him with the thought of quenching his thirst with it. In either case, *i.e.*, whether he continues to see the false presentation or whether even the very appearance of it disappears, he feels convinced that the basis of the illusions had *not changed* into the illusory

perceptions, or had not in any other way been affected by the latter.

The second of these intermediate categories is the phenomenal world that we experience in our waking life, and which, after all, causes us all the problems of philosophy and religion. The school of thought we are here representing tries to understand it also on the analogy of the erroneous perceptions described before. But it would be wrong to state that they put it on a par with them. What they contend is that there have been men who have experienced an *awakening* corresponding to the disillusionment from illusory perceptions. It is an awakening into a wider consciousness, on gaining which—and it is *then alone*—the phenomenal world is recognised to be on a par with experiences of illusory perception, *i.e.*, it either disappears completely, or if it continues to be perceived, it is no longer felt to be, in itself, of any reality or value. In other words whatever element of reality and value were felt with regard to the world, is now transferred to its underlying basis on which it is found to appear. The world no longer binds, frightens, attracts, repels or deludes a person who has thus been awakened; and he distinctly perceives that that wider consciousness (Brahman) into which he has awakened—which is also the basis of the world and of his own perceiving ego forming a part of it—is not in the least affected by the unimaginably stupendous world-phenomenon appearing on it.

From the foregoing statements it must not, however, be understood that this school equates the experience of the world with the illusions of life in an unqualified way. Such an equa-

tion, no doubt, has significance when the awakening referred to has taken place ; but not till then. On the other hand, at the moment of experience the world is *actually* there for those who perceive it. Yet those of us who have come across the testimony of the awakened ones, and who are convinced that their testimony is perfectly reliable, have to take into account their experience also when we philosophise or construct an understandable theory of the world in terms of intellectual concepts ; for the philosopher's work is to synthesise all aspects of experience into a coherent whole. Hence they speak of two levels of experience, the second having in itself two layers. The first level is the experience of Brahman. Because it is unchangeable, it is the ultimate basis of every other form of experience. The second level is the experience of changeful phenomena, having within itself two internal divisions : (1) the common illusions and false perceptions of life, which come and go within the limits of our life itself, and (2) our experience of life as a whole, which constitutes a series of changes as far as its inner structure is concerned, and which, on the awakening into Brahman-consciousness, either disappears completely or proves to be unsubstantial. It must be carefully noted that these two aspects of the second level of experience are grouped together and studied by a comparative analysis of them, not because this school fails to understand the distinction between illusion and life, but because from a *higher point of view* they observe striking similarities between them, namely, (a) they both come and go, (b) they are actually experienced by the perceiver at

the time of perception, and (c) in spite of this sense of reality for the time being, the dawn of knowledge reveals their unsubstantiality in so far as they have not in the least transformed or affected the substratum on which they are found to appear.

Now, what place can this second level of experience be given logically, in a consistent and comprehensive world-view. At the two poles are the absolute experience of Brahman on the one hand, and the total non-experience of fictitious entities like 'barren woman's' son on the other. The second level of experience seems to occupy a middle position between these two,—by being actually felt at the time of experience, it is on the side of Brahman experience and has to be called real ; by being incapable in the least of affecting or transforming the substratum that forms the basis of its experience, it is on the side of non-existent and fictitious entities like barren 'woman's son'. Being thus unfit to be classified either as really real or really unreal, man's logical faculty can do no better than suspend the impossible task of defining it, and feel satisfied by inventing a new term, *Mithya* or 'false' to denote this peculiar indefinable character of it. When this school of thought describes the world as *Maya*, those of them who are purely logically-minded mean nothing more nor less than that the world is *Mithya*, an entity whose reality is something intermediate between absolute existence and total non-existence. To some this may make sense, and to others no sense. In either case it is not right to charge this school, and their doctrines of *Maya*, as describing the world as unreal ; they call it only

Mithya, false, drawing our attention thereby to this peculiar feature of being indescribable.

III

We stated at the beginning that in every spiritual world-view the Maya theory enters in some form or other, however much their champions may denounce that theory, and protest against including it in their scheme of things. We shall illustrate this point by one or two examples.

Christianity is generally declared to have a very hard and unyielding sense of reality for the world. Nonetheless it has got a peculiar doctrine of creation, which can easily be interpreted as implying the Maya theory. This is the doctrine that God created the world out of nothing. In many forms of dualism, as those of India, an entity called matter is recognised, and God is conceived as working with it. But Christianity, probably to emphasise the omnipotence of God, conceives the world, including any primordial unmanifested stuff of it, as non-existent before, and God as giving it existence by an act of His will. An intelligible meaning can be made of it only in terms of the rope-snake analogy of the exponents of the Maya doctrine. In relation to the being of God the world is as good as non-existent, in so far as He has not actually transformed into it, and there is no second entity than Himself to account for it. Yet it is experienced, like the rope-snake, and as long as man is at the level of worldly life, he continues to experience it as 'being'. Mystical Christianity also recognises an awakening into Divine consciousness, corresponding to the Vedantic *gnosis*. And the greatest type of

mystic is only he who can apply himself to work in the world without the slightest distraction to the state of poise in Divine consciousness. How can this psychological state be translated into logical terms except in terms of the Maya doctrine? The world-phenomena appears on pure consciousness, but that pure consciousness is not affected by it. In other words, we arrive at the conclusion that the world is *Mithya*.

In the Indian systems of pluralism, the position is somewhat different. They accept matter and individual souls as positively existent entities, and not as creations out of nothing. They, however, posit different logical relations between them and God, and secure God's omnipotence by asserting the absolute dependence of these entities on Him—a dependence so fundamental that without Him their very existence is inconceivable. Some of them secure this by positing between God and the world the relation of the body and the limbs; others insist on absolute difference between them, but at the same time maintain also the absolute dependence of the other entities on God. While they thus seem to secure the reality of the world, the problem remains for them as to how they can explain the central fact accepted by all schools of Indian thought, namely, that the world does not in any way limit God or taint Him. An organic relation would make it inconceivable how God can be untainted by the world. An absolute difference would imply boundaries for the entities concerned, and this would mean that they limit one another. Now it is these very difficulties of human understanding in forming a conception of the two essential

features of any spiritual world-view, viz., the Deity being not limited by the world and His not being tainted by anything in it, that the doctrine of Maya and the snake-rope relationship seek to secure.

We would contend that the essence of the Maya doctrine, from the spiritual point of view, is this non-limitation and non-contamination of the Deity by the world. Any world-view that accepts these points, accepts the substance of it, although it may reject the shadow of it. This shadow consists in the logical wranglings that have centred round abstract and finally undefinable conceptions like 'existence', 'non-existence', 'real', 'unreal' and so on. Differences of views in this regard are bound to persist—since logical defects can be shown in all these theories, including the Maya doctrine. But in spite of all that, the central spiritual content of the Maya doctrine remains.

IV

Till now we have dealt with only one aspect of the doctrine of Maya, namely, how it logically formulates a theory of experience and its different levels. If one accepts the truth of the different levels of experience referred to, the characterisation of the world as '*Mithya*', false, becomes the most understandable description of its ontological status. But the enquiring mind is not satisfied with this mere logical analysis, and though many a philosopher would discourage further questioning about it, and prefer to leave the discussion there, saying that it is a statement of fact, the problem will be raised again and again as long as man feels the push and pressure of the cosmos from outside, and the

bondage and pull of his psycho-physical nature from within. How did this world, though it be *Mithya* and ultimately recognised as resembling the rope-snake,—how did it arise in the pure, non-dual Brahman-consciousness, its basis and substratum. Only one answer has been given, and with all the defects that can possibly be shown in it, we have to accept it, because none better has been given.

The answer consists in that Brahman has a wonderful Shakti, inherent Power or Will, and without taking this power into consideration, life with its twin aspects of bondage and liberation, cannot be understood at all.

Of course the logical mind can bring forward many formidable objections to such a doctrine. It may object that this doctrine smuggles once again into Brahman such differences as those between substance, attribute and their relation, all of which are said to be negated in Brahman. To be honest, one has to admit that this objection cannot be answered satisfactorily, but that is not because the conception is absurd, but because the logician expects a transcendental truth to be described in terms of a world-bound logic. Brahman and its Power are identical; we speak of Power separately only to clarify our thought in regard to the facts of worldly experience, bondage and liberation—i.e., when we have to account for these. It is only by virtue of this Power that the undifferentiatedness of Brahman deserves to be called pure experience as contrasted with the darkness of unconsciousness. For, this Power is so mysterious and unique that it gives rise to the universe of gigantic proportions and inexhaustible diversities. And if its

mystery as manifested in the might and skill of creation impresses the mind with awe and wonder, it becomes all the more so to contemplate the metaphysical fact of its being the substratum and the impulsion behind this cosmic show, and yet of its remaining unaffected in its status as pure Brahman experience, as illustrated by the examples of rope-snake and mirage.

Thus Brahman as Power is the explanation we arrive at in seeking the cause of the world-phenomena, which includes our own egos. To the ego involved in the world system, the facts of the system appear to be the sole reality. This is the sleep of ignorance, and though its source cannot be traced in time, we have to ascribe it only to the spell cast by the same Power, just as we ascribe the whole world-phenomenon to it. By the impulsion coming from the self-same Power, this sleep of ignorance is broken too. The soul with reference to whom this awakening has taken place, thereupon be-

comes centred in Brahman and gains the Brahman consciousness—i.e., recognises the self as one with all, without however being limited and tainted by the all. It is the Power alone that bestows this knowledge, revealing itself as Brahman untainted and as the world-phenomena subsisting in it, as the water of the mirage in the desert and the rope-snake on the rope. This Omnipotent Power is Maya, and it is this Power that the great religious traditions of the world indicate by such expressions as God, Iswara and Divine Mother.

The question, 'What is Maya?' may now be answered. In the first place it indicates a logical formulation of the nature of the world experience, and the spiritual attitude corresponding to it. It is, in the next place, the omnipotent and omniscient Source of world experience. And from the point of view of the spiritual aspirant, it is in a special sense the forces of bondage and liberation, in the form of which the Power is expressing in the world.

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

By A Devotee

[Swami Shivananda, otherwise known as Mahapurushji Maharaj, was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In his life-time he had travelled extensively all over India, and was responsible for quickening the spiritual life of innumerable men. These conversations are pages from the diaries of his disciples, and contain many of the precious instructions imparted by him to spiritual aspirants.]

T was 7-30 A.M. Mahapurushji had just then come back from the shrine room. In those days he used to spend a long time in meditation in the mornings. At daybreak, during the time of the holy service to

the Master, he would enter the shrine and sit down on a deer skin for meditation. Some days, it would be very late before he came back from that place. On this day, after return from the shrine, he was seated

on a chair in his room. The contemplative mood was still over him, and so he looked much absorbed in deep thought. Some of the monks and Brahmacharins of the Math as well as lay devotees prostrated before him. The Swami was very briefly enquiring about their welfare ; for his mind was not in a mood to hold conversation even then. A monk of the Math had returned on the previous day after a pilgrimage to Rameswaram, Dwaraka and other places. As soon as this monk entered the room and prostrated, the Swami saluted with folded hands, saying, "Victory unto Rameshwar ! Victory unto Dwaraka nathji !" Addressing him he said, "You should contemplate on such subjects and try to visualise the holy objects you have seen ; for the purpose of going out on a pilgrimage is that. Nothing is gained spiritually if one goes to holy places simply as a tourist. The real devotees contemplate on the holy associations of these places to purify their minds. The Divine has become all these ; the places of pilgrimage indicate His glory. While revolving in mind about God one should think of His powers too. One may perceive that He is specially manifest in holy places. He is not indeed confined to our shrine room only ; He is the Lord of the universe and He comprehends everything and exists everywhere. But in sacred places and in the company of holy men and devotees, His special presence is felt.

The Monk: By my pilgrimage to various places on this occasion, I have got a firm conviction that there is a special manifestation of the Divine in these holy spots, and that the Lord protects us and leads us by the hand

at every step. I spent three days at Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin) and liked the place immensely. Most of the time was spent in meditation and Japa, worship and reading of the scriptures. The place also is so charming that the mind would not like to quit it. By the grace of the Master, our stay there was nicely arranged in quite an unpremeditated way.

Mahapurushji : Now and then one should go about without anybody's help to fall back upon. Then only real dependence on the Lord will come. And if real surrender to the Lord does not come, nothing else will avail. Much of the spiritual practices which one has to go through is simply to bring about that spirit of surrender to God. And He undertakes the whole responsibility of one who surrenders oneself to Him with an undeviating mind, and protects him in every way. It is for this reason that the Lord makes a declaration in the Gita, "But those who meditate on Me and worship Me and no other, and who are ever devoted to Me—to them I ensure the power to gain the new and preserve the old." One who worships Him whole-heartedly surrenders oneself unto Him, and He bears his burden out of his grace.

By and by the talk drifted to the fourth Ashrama or the life of a monk. A newly ordained monk asked, "Maharaj, what are the rules to be observed by a monk. While engaged in the various activities, it will be well-nigh impossible for us to conform ourselves to all those rules prescribed for the monk in Paramahansa and Narayana Upanishads. Last night I had some talk

on these topics with Swami Suddha-
nandaji."

Mahapurushji : Yes, there are many rules prescribed for the monks but you need not follow them all. Those are not intended for you. You are both ascetics and selfless workers. Swamiji has left a new ideal for you. You have to mind your spiritual practices, and side by side you have to do without attachment such work as would be conducive to those spiritual practices. Necessarily it will not be possible for you to follow those ancient rules to the very letter. They are for monks who exclusively devote themselves to reflection, discrimination and contemplation, and do not engage themselves in any other activities. Mark, my boy, if the few essentials are persistently adhered to, all other things would gradually come in time.

Monk : What are those essentials, Maharaj ?

Mahapurushji : The essential thing is renunciation of lust and gold. It is enough if one truly gives up lust and gold. Mere external renunciation is not enough. Even the inward inclination for them has to be eradicated. For lust and greed are at the root of all those desires—the desire for progeny, property, etc.,—which you offered into the fire while making oblations at the time of Sannyasa. Renunciation of lust and greed in every possible way—that alone is

the one concern of a monk. Having truly taken refuge in Him, one has to wait with patience. He is God. Out of mercy He himself shall make everything known and explained.

Monk : But, Maharaj, should not one retain some desires for the maintenance of the body, as long as it exists ?

Mahapurushji : Yes, that is true. Even in the scriptures, such directions are given. We find in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, "Knowing this very Self, the Brahmanas renounce the desire for sons, for wealth and for the worlds, and lead a mendicant life." So much desire will have to be retained as will be required for the maintenance of the body. One should beg only just a little food, etc., whenever necessity arises. But such announcement is made in no scripture that one should gormandize or seek comfortable life. The object of maintaining the body should only be to offer sincere prayers to the Lord, and to engage oneself in His service.

Monk : Well, Maharaj, how is Sannyasa possible for the dualists.

Mahapurushji : Why will it not be possible ? The real meaning of Sannyasa is the complete elimination of the three desires. By giving up every other desire, the true dualist wants nothing else but God only. Really God is the only object of his desire. The desire to realise Him is no desire at all.

THE UNIVERSE AS A 'MIND-CONSTRUCT'

By Swami Siddheswarananda

[Swami Siddheswarananda of the Ramakrishna Math is at present preaching the message of Vedanta in France. The following is the substance of a talk he gave at Geneva to a distinguished audience of scientists, philosophers and psychologists. It deals with some of the pure philosophical aspects of Vedanta.]

IN every act of perception two factors are involved—the subject and the object. The subject is the seer in the act and the object, the seen. Thoughts become aware of things, and thoughts become aware of thoughts. If we now begin to analyse that which finally sees in any act of perception or apperception, we find it is only that basis into which all ideas sink. The presence of ideas in the mind gives us their awareness. If ideas give us their awareness, then that into which ideas dissolve, i.e., the mind, must be the basis for all forms of awareness or consciousness which ideas bring with them, as soon as they are born from the mind.

The term consciousness is used in psychology only when there is a subject-object relation established by the presence of ideas. From this standpoint we hear such expressions as reduction of consciousness or enlargement of consciousness. A condition where no ideas exist at all is not considered to be a normal one, and any seeking of such a state may even be labelled as courting a condition where consciousness becomes naught. The Sanskrit term *Prajna* or *Chaitanya* is generally translated as Consciousness. It is used to denote the fundamental basis of our personality, the basis of the mind, where all ideas sink and from which all ideas take birth. If this pure mind where all ideas dissolve is thought of as the negation of consciousness, then how

can consciousness be produced from non-consciousness? Whatever kind of existence ideas may have, so long as they are known to exist, they cannot be the products of non-existence. To argue analogically, the absence of objects cannot prove the absence of the light that illumines them. Similarly the absence of percepts or cognitions cannot establish the absence of the perceiver or the cogniser. Above all, to say that nothing exists, one must be aware of non-existence, which necessarily implies the existence of that which is aware of such thinking. The inconceivability of non-existence of one's own consciousness proves the untenability of nihilism or absolute non-existence.

Ideas have the power to appear as a thought, a brain wave, or to even exteriorise as solid objects external to us. For example, take the case of a mass illusion created by a magician. The phenomena that appeared external to the observers for the time being, is afterwards known not to exist at all, and what seemed to appear at the time when the phenomena happened, only proves to be the projection of one's own mind. Even the dreams that we get, teach us that mind can create a universe of experience, wherein it can bifurcate into an inner world of thoughts and feelings and an external world of things and objects. Although the whole of the dream is known as a content of the dreamer's mind, we

still get the lesson that mind has the faculty of presenting two fronts at the same time, i.e. the inner world of thoughts and the outer world of things. My normal waking personality is forgotten in the dream. The dream weaves at times another personality, for example, it becomes X with his own mind and memories establishing relations with an external world of environments, and would at times live through years, even though according to waking experience this would not have lasted even a few seconds. But on waking all is proved to be only a manifestation of mind. We are not here discussing the genesis of a particular dream. We are only noting how mind can throw out ideas that appear for a time as three dimensional objects, and how an assemblage of ideas can give us the sense of the external and the internal.

Whenever mind presents ideas, the first idea that necessarily comes to consciousness is that of the ego and its individuation. With this individuation of the ego, there simultaneously arises space-time as well as causal relations. In every idea that appears as thought, in every idea that concretises into object, there exists only the self-same mind. This mind is not a mathematical unity made of several parts, but, to put this in an imagery howsoever defective, it is a homogeneous mass of the same substance, i.e., the Mind. This Mind considered abstractly without ideas that give us their awareness, is neither a personality, nor an extra-cosmic God nor any other mysterious being. It is only Mind, pure and simple. This Mind into which all ideas sink is the eternal knower; for as we have mentioned above, if the nature of ideas is

to give us their *awareness*, then the nature of that into which ideas dissolve must be awareness pure and simple—a content-less consciousness as some prefer to call it.

One of the most important lessons we learn by trying to analyse the nature of mind, and the ideas that arise in it, is the truth regarding time and space. The conceptions regarding time and space ever go together. We cannot have a conception of time without referring to space. Generally our conception of space is as something external to us, and in the same manner our notion of time is an external movement existing irrespective of us. It is the clock or the sun-dial that regulates the movement of time for us. What is time? Time is only a succession of moments. When do we become aware of such moments? Certainly it is only when we have an awareness of an idea. The sense of time is regulated by the movement of ideas. Ideas move with tremendous velocity, and when one idea is different from the other idea, the consciousness of their difference, gives us the sense of time. Subjectively, we feel the length of time intensely when differences between ideas are felt violently. Take the example of a convict condemned to the gallows, awaiting overnight the fatal doom. One night may appear to him as years. On the other hand take the case of a person plunged in an aesthetic or mystic experience. Hours as judged by the clock time may appear only as a moment. But whether with an objective or subjective reference, time-sense can come to us only in reference to space. It is not absolutely necessary that externality should be an existence outside

our bodies. This conception of externality and internality comes into existence when mind projects a colony of ideas. The attitude of looking at externality as some unit outside our consciousness, does not stand the test of reason. We cannot have any knowledge except in terms of consciousness. We cannot have any real report of any existence except as an idea in our mind. Any external object brings to us the certificate of its existence only in and through mind. When I use the term —‘mind perceiving’— I mean the awareness which implies the mind becoming conscious of an idea. Without this awareness we cannot get any report of externality. When mind becomes aware of an idea, we have seen its potency, not only to click in our brain as a thought, but also to exteriorise as a three-dimensional unit, subject to the sense organs as an object of perception. What really happens in either case is nothing but a series of the operation of ideas; and immediately two ideas appear we have the sense of space-time. The division of time and space into subjective and objective is entirely arbitrary. *When two ideas present themselves before consciousness, the perceived idea is external to the idea that becomes aware of it*, and this sense of externality is the basis of the feeling of subjective space. It is in relation to the movement of ideas that we get the notion of the passage of time. The area where movement of ideas take place is called in Sanskrit—Chidakasa (mind-space), as distinguished from the area external to our individual mind called Mahakasa (Great Space). It is only when move-

ment of ideas begins that we become conscious of space-time. When the same idea is repeated, as one idea is not different from the other, time would appear static, although there is succession of thought. So also there can be no idea of extension if the same point in space is touched often and often. To have the sense of space there must be the consciousness of having covered by touch or measurement different points. There is an inseparable unity between ideas, for all ideas are only in mind. Ideas that appear as thought and ideas that appear as objects are all mind-made. Time-sense arising from the birth of ideas, and space-sense born likewise, are all mind-made.

Science is now positing a position very much like the one propounded hundreds of years back by the great Buddhistic metaphysician, the seer Nagarjuna, and the Vedic Acharya Gaudapada, in their respective treatises through a close study of the problems of the waking, dream and dream-less sleep states. The conclusion of some of the scientists that causal sequence itself is a presentation of the mind, and that it is only a habit of mind to seek and find ‘relations’ (causal) has long been arrived at by as strict a research that modern laboratory conditions can impose, by the savants mentioned above. They adhere to the same experimental method of analysing experience. The mechanistic theory of the universe is breaking down, and some of the world renowned savants in science have begun to realise that perhaps the whole of this universe is only a ‘mind-construct.’

MEDITATIONS: SECRET OF WORK

By Anilbaran Ray

[Sj. Anilbaran Ray of Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry, presents his reflections on spiritualised work]

I WAS a passionate lover of work, Mother, and thought that I was a great worker. Work for the sake of work, the greatest amount of work, was regarded by me as the greatest good, and I always sought opportunities where I would find the greatest scope for my energy and activity.

I did not know then that I was labouring under a great delusion, that what I regarded as my work was not really mine, but Nature's play in me ; that when I regarded myself as being most active, I was really a helpless tool in the hands of the forces of Nature. In ignorance, I identified myself with these activities of Nature in me, I took an absorbing interest in the results, thinking them to be my own, and so the play went on indefinitely, and I lived the life of an enchanted slave.

At last, in Thy Grace, Thou hast opened my eyes, Mother, and shown to me the true way of escape, and given me the taste of true liberty. Still the attachment is not wholly gone, still I lose myself in the mechanical play of Nature. Even when Thou workest through me, Mother, I think that it is the work of my ego, and I judge the results from the egotistic standpoint.

Remove this egotism and attachment completely from me, Mother, let me dissociate myself completely from the lower nature. I shall be really a free agent and a great worker only when my identification with Thee becomes complete.

* * *

Whatever we may do, great or small, can be done in a perfect manner ; there is a right way of doing everything. But in our egotistic ignorance we do things most clumsily ; we grope and stumble and seem to arrive at success merely by chance.

We are open to all sorts of forces which continually pull us in all directions. Our mind is ever restless and cannot remain fixed to anything for a long time. Our body is bound by fixed habits and instincts, and does not allow a free movement. We rely on our own power ; we think that the results solely depend on our own exertions ; we seek the satisfaction of our personal ends and desires ; we are agitated by egotistic passions and emotions ; we are impatient, fidgety, trustless—sometimes excited, sometimes depressed, often indifferent. It is no wonder that our greatest efforts produce such mean results, and our works leave behind such unpleasant reactions and bondage.

The secret is to rise above the ego and to work always for Thee, Mother, with the aid of Thy force and Thy will. We must leave the consequences entirely in Thy hands. We must see only what we have to do, and do it with all our heart and soul. Working, thus, always in union with Thee, and for Thy sake, keeping our heart full of Thee, Mother, we can never go wrong, can never come to grief. At last, a time will come, when Thou wilt take up all our work, and directly use us as the instruments of Thy will. Only then will all our work be perfect and divine.

Work is a great force through which we can establish our union with Thee, Mother ; there is nothing wrong in work itself ; it is the false attitude behind our work and our ignorant handling of it that makes work a bondage.

We act for personal gains and ignorantly think that the results of our actions depend on our personal efforts, and that our life, our very existence depends on such work. Hence we are perturbed by hope and fear, we are disturbed by success and failure ; and work done in this restless, ignorant, egotistic way becomes most imperfect and stumbling, and inevitably by its reactions forge the chains, which keep us bound to the lower life. Egotistic desires and personal motives have a validity only in the lowest scale in life. When we want to rise and to fulfil the true mission of our life, they become great obstacles, and hide the Truth from us.

It is ignorance to think that, unless we act from egotistic motives, there can be no action. Everyone has a mission to fulfil in life, a Divine mission, and the impulse we feel for work rises from this fundamental need of our nature. If we can free ourselves from the perturbations of the lower nature, our higher nature will spontaneously express itself in the right work in the right way. Instead of wasting ourselves in blind, useless efforts, we should calmly aspire to know the work which Thou demandest from us, Mother, and do it with all our heart and soul. Through such impersonal and dedicated work,

we shall gradually realise our union and identity with Thee.

* * *

Work is of value to us as a part of our Sadhana, only when it serves to bring us closer to Thee, Mother ; otherwise, it is an obstacle, a waste of time and energy, a mere concession to the ignorant hankering of our vital nature.

As long as we are attached to our work and feel interested in the egotistic play of our energies, it keeps us hopelessly bound to the lower life and obscures the Divine from our view. But if it can be turned to the service of the Divine, at once it ceases to be a bondage, and becomes itself a great force of liberation.

As work is an inevitable necessity of our nature, we should use it for our uplift by making it more and more selfless and devoted to the service of the Mother. Thus purified, we begin to get the direct touch of the Mother, to hear her voice within us, to receive direct guidance and inspiration from her ; work then becomes a great joy and a great force of transformation.

Gradually, we shall feel that we are only instruments in the hands of the Divine Mother, mere channels for her manifestation in the world. In our work, we shall see the play of Her forces ; instead of being ignorantly attached to our work, we shall through it be attached to the Mother. Our work will make our devotion more deep ; our devotion will make our work more perfect and joyous ; thus, through devoted work and active devotion, we shall grow in light and power and joy, and ultimately become one with the consciousness of the Divine Mother.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA IN AMERICA

By Swami Akhilananda

[Swami Akhilananda is the founder and the leader of the Vedanta Society of Providence, U.S.A. It is from direct experience of American life that he speaks herein of the type of service that Indian ideals can do to America.]

THE Renaissance of the 13th and 14th Centuries changed the whole outlook of European civilisation. Man began to inquire into the forces of Nature with the help of objective study. The spirit of inquiry and doubting of experiences beyond the sense realm had a far-reaching effect on the life of man. As a protest against this there arose St. Francis, St. Anthony, St. Theresa and others to reinforce the Christian ideal of love and service based on God-consciousness. In spite of all the spiritual forces that were gathered by such towering Christian mystics, the trend of European thought was thoroughly changed. Man began to value everything from the standpoint of the new method that he discovered. As some of the religious leaders discredited, ridiculed and persecuted the new method which then began to be called the 'scientific method', so the other side, inspired by Rousseau and many successive thinkers, wholly tabooed spiritual idealism. Much could be said on both sides. Then the discovery of steam, and later on the use of electricity in various departments of life, thoroughly revolutionised the every-day life of Europe.

America is fundamentally a child of Europe. The new background of European civilisation permeated the spirit of American life. As a young nation she has more youthful vigour, spirit of adventure and enthusiasm. Consequently America, in spite of her Christian background, made tremend

ous progress in science and mechanical devices, and surpassed all the countries in the practical application of scientific knowledge. It is a fact that the whole world is looking to America for guidance in economics, in political philosophy, in educational systems and other progressive methods. American efficiency and systems of organisation should be imitated all over the Asiatic countries. I think it will not be out of place to say that the mother country, Europe, is to-day largely imitating American systems.

Can India or her mystics give anything to help America. This is the logical question which we, representatives of Indian culture, face every day. Many American religious leaders seriously doubt whether India, ascetic, negative and other-worldly, can contribute anything to the progressive, dynamic America which is setting the standard followed by all the progressive countries of the world. Even Japan, the greatest of the Asiatic countries, is what she is to-day because of Commodore Perry, an American. Through him, the so-called static Japan was inspired by the dynamic activities of American civilisation. In spite of America's achievements she is in need of something to ward off the evils of material progress without spiritual background. Her state is like that of a power engine without the harmonising element behind it. Consequently there is great disorder in individual as well as in

collective life. Power guided by selfishness will destroy itself. The baneful effect is felt in every-day affairs. America should acquire a new emphasis on the spiritual values of life. There are some American thinkers, the humanists, who believe they can establish social justice through a number of laws based on the utilitarian view of 'the greatest good to the greatest number'. Unfortunately they cannot really convince man that there is reason for him to give up selfish accumulation of wealth and share it with others. The service-motive cannot come effectively into the life of man unless there is a real background for such service.

The life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna actually revived the spiritual ideal of the religious life of India. He re-emphasised and demonstrated the spiritual values. Sense perceptions and the evidences of the senses are not the only method of knowledge. Spiritual experiences are true and more valuable than the experiences of scientific research. The emphasis that he gave to super-sensuous experience is a challenge to the ultra-empirical methods.

The so-called scientific method of understanding the outer world is not the only method of knowing the truth. In fact the knowledge of the inner world can be achieved immediately and directly through a different method which is in no way inferior to the methods of objective study. So far as logical and pragmatic values are concerned, the spiritual experiences of Sri Ramakrishna and other great mystics of the world are real and valid. It would be extremely narrow and dogmatic to deny such experiences their ultimate value to

life and to accept only the evidence of sense perception, however subtle they may be. Over-emphasis on the modern scientific outlook really created the present economic and social evils.

The Vedantic doctrine of the divinity of man which was emphasised and explained by the great Swami Vivekananda, the foremost disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, is giving a new outlook of life, and will gradually change the relation of man to man. All persons, Eastern and Western, will treat their fellow-beings not as mere men but as veritable embodiments of the Divine Being. This emphasis has slowly been changing the conduct of the students of Vedanta and of others, directly and indirectly. Man can no longer do things for his own selfish ends but has to learn to serve his fellow beings in the spirit of service and worship embodied in the gospel of Karma Yoga preached by Swami Vivekananda.

Activities motivated by selfish ends, profit and accumulation, are creating serious social and economical disturbances. The mechanical and other scientific devices are helping mass-production, thereby creating big syndicates and other such organisations. Individuals are losing their initiative, integrity and often their sense of self-respect. Consequently there have been innumerable internecine and destructive quarrels. These are inevitable evils due to a selfish interpretation of the law of survival of the fittest. Sri Ramakrishna's teaching, "Jiva is Shiva," namely, man is divine, and his emphasis on the spirit of service, would really ward off the evils of the modern clashes of interests. Man will then work, not for his

selfish ends, but for the good and happiness of family and society. Social justice which is craved for to-day can be established only when a man realises that he is doing his duty in the spirit of service to his fellow-beings who are divine. This is the real basis of humanistic social justice. The divinity of man and its logical conclusion of Karma Yoga are the greatest contributions of the Ramakrishna Movement to modern America, nay to the world.

Modern systems of transportation and other means of communication have brought the different parts of the world together. The different races have been brought very close to one another. America, the land of opportunity, attracts the different racial and national groups. We find almost all the races of the world in America. The racial troubles are no doubt very strong in Europe and Asia, and the wave of racial hatred is directly and indirectly touching the shores of America too. Sri Ramakrishna's emphasis on the harmony of religions and acceptance of different religious methods as true means of God realisation, have great value in the cultural life of America. In fact, they will harmonise the different racial and religious groups of American civilisation. We believe that organisations or leagues based on expediency cannot really unite different elements. Religious understanding and acceptance can alone harmonise all the social, racial and economic differences. In fact, this message of the modern incarnation will be the solution of the world problems in various ways.

It is very evident that there is a divine purpose in that Swami

Vivekananda, the great apostle of Sri Ramakrishna, came to give that message to America. Sri Ramakrishna's message is harmonising the spiritual idealism of India with the scientific mind of America. Intense and incessant activities make man restless and create nerve disorder and mental ailments. It has been accepted by all thoughtful educationist, and religious and medical authorities in America that there is a great need for mental balance and relaxation. Excessive attendance of moving pictures and other such recreations are rather disturbing and dissipating agencies. The modern medical authorities are advocating real mental relaxation and integration of mind. Spiritual practices as elaborated and applied by Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples are of great importance to American life in the matter of fulfilling this need. Sri Ramakrishna's methods are given scientifically to suit the different mental constitutions of individuals—emotional, rational, introspective and active. He also furnished the rational explanation of life and existence, giving a definite method by which to attain supersensuous realisation. Although it is clear that men of realisation are few and far between, yet this re-emphasis on the spiritual value of life and on meditation and other such practices have to permeate the collective life of America. It will not be out of place to say that India will also be greatly benefited if America offers her contribution to Indian civilisation. Efficiency and dynamic activity which are characteristic of American life will be of immense good to India.

THE UPANISHADS AND WORLD LITERATURE

By Prof. Ernest P. Horowitz

[Mr. Horowitz of the Hunter College, New York, is an authority on world literature.]

IN the age of the Upanishads, Yajnavalkya and lesser leaders of protestant philosophy met in the silence of the forests—in places comparatively free from the influence of ritual-bound Brahmins. Forest wisdom transferred creative power and eternal life from the Vedic gods to the essence of manifest life. The relation of sun-rays to the sun is the same as between visible things and their hidden being and inmost self. Upanishadic sages interpreted Vedic gods and rites as St. Paul re-explained the Mosaic creed. In the first letter to the Corinthians (5, 8) leavened bread (the use of which during Passover was forbidden; Exodus 12, 15) is likened to the leaven of malice and wickedness, to be rejected for the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Even so was Deva-worship spiritualized by Yajnavalkya to self-reverence and intuitive fervour until all individuality melts and dissolves as a salt doll in the infinite sea.

I am the Devas ; in my mind
And body they are all confined.
I am imprisoned in this clay,
And beating at the bars each day.
E'en soul is an illusive thing,
A butterfly upon the wing.
Spirit in matter is enfleshed ;
Soul, mind and body are enmeshed,
An intermingling trinity,
All three in one, and one in three.
The body wears out like a dress ;
there is too much superstition about

the tomb. There are no dead in the graveyard. Death is a migration to novel conditions ; your future ascent depends on the use you make of current opportunities. Lift up your hearts ; possibilities are open beyond your boldest imagination. In order to change them to abiding reality (Sat), subconsciousness has to be cleansed and controlled. At death the body returns to the elements to which it belongs. The personal self returns to the spirit-world, but no longer as your present personality. The world soul is the reservoir of life-force. Our spirits replenish the universal spirit which contains all the spirits we have ever known and loved on earth. We have cosmic relations ; our immortality is impersonal. Our vibrations must be rhythmic, in harmony with the spheres, that we may grow tender, resolute and fancy-rich. These are our spirit-resources which replenish the world-soul. Out of universal vision (which means self-identification with the cosmic self) grows faith in transformation.

The study of world literature is necessarily comparative. Upanishadic wisdom recurs in Celtic song. India and Ireland, the two crowns of thorn worn by aged Britannia, share the faith in phenomenal flux and transformation, the masquerade of life, and Divine unity hidden behind the veil of vanity. When the Milesian Kshatriyas first landed in Ireland,

mage Amergin burst out in song :

I am the wind on the sea, a powerful billow,

The sound of the ocean, an infuriate ox ;

A hawk on the cliff, a flash of the sun-shine ;

The wild boar in pursuit ; a river salmon ;

The lake of lowlands, the rhythm of song !

Organic life is dynamic. When a force has done its allotted task, assigned by Nature, the force gets exhausted, but cannot perish. Vital elements never die ; they just wear their form out. A devitalized and depleted force is driven back to the source of decay for regeneration. It passes into Nature's inexhaustible storehouse, and waits for the next call from Mother Kali. Her intensest force is human vitality. Combination is life, dissolution is death, reconstruction is rebirth. In truth, all these evolutions of force are Kali's playthings ; the only reality is Atma,

the self unmanifest and coiled up in the heart of every creature.

It is interesting to note that the people of Moscow (who are averse to a Personal God as the Buddhists of old) are planning an Institute of World Literature with the object of training young Soviet writers along the lines of world-consciousness (Atma-bodha). The works of titans of past thought will be re-examined from this most ancient and most modern point of view ; among them Goethe, Voltaire, Dante, Plato and Yajna-Valkya of Upanishad fame. None of them were narrow nationalists and intriguing politicians ; all were cosmopolitans, world-citizens with a cosmic outlook. New Russia has much to learn from India, and comrades realise it more and more. Atma-bodha, the keynote of Upanishadic wisdom, implies self-oblivion and its correlative, sacrificial love incarnate in Avatars such as Chaitanya and Ramakrishna.

DRAMATIC COMPOSITION IN SACRED LITERATURE

By Prof. M. A. Shustery

[Mr. Shustery is the Professor of Persian, Arabic and Urdu in the Mysore University. In the following article he gives an account of the dramatic element present in some sections of three great scriptures of the world—the Vedas, the Avesta and the Quoran.]

NOT only in India where all arts and sciences are traced to a divine origin but also in other countries like ancient Greece, the dramatic art is considered to have arisen from religious motives. In Greece, drama started by representing actions

believed to have been performed by gods. In India, the composers of Rig Veda praised gods in certain hymns in the form of dialogues. Some of these dialogues developed into legends and stories and finally appeared as dramas, such as the famous work of

Kalidasa, entitled *Vikram and Urvashi*. For we know that the plot of this famous work was originally a dialogue in the Rig Veda (10, 95) between Pururavas and Urvashi. There is no doubt that the authors of these dialogues did not intend them to be enacted as dramas, for they had no idea of drama in the modern sense. But it is certain that Vedic and even Avestaic form of worship was semi-dramatic. There were more than one priest to perform a religious ritual, and perhaps there was a mixture of prose with poetic recitations. In Avesta there are certain hymns which need insertion of prose to make their sense clear. In style they are dramatic, but they cannot be properly called dramatic pieces because their authors never had any such intention. I make a selection of such hymns and passages from Rig Veda, Avesta and Quoran. With regard to the Quoran, this is perhaps the first time that passages are pointed out, which are not only dramatic in form but which can even be staged, although, I must confess, the Prophet Mohammed had nothing to do with drama.

VEDAS

Pururavas is one of the several heavenly phenomena connected with sun or sun-light, and Urvashi is the morning mist, or as Mr. Narayana Iyengar says in his book *Indo-Aryan Mythology*. Pururavas is the upper piece of wood (Uttararani) which by rubbing with the lower piece generates fire. Urvashi is considered as the lower piece of wood. Again it is supposed that Pururavas is the moon, Urvashi the star Rohini, and the two rams the Asvins; or again it is supposed that Pururavas is the sun, and

Urvashi the Dawn and so forth. I take Pururavas as sun-light, and Urvashi as mist that disappears at sunrise, the vapour being absorbed by the sun's rays. This natural change is allegorised into a story. Urvashi meets Pururavas accidentally, and they fell in love. She returns to Svarga of Indra to take part in the performance of a drama where she falls victim to the curse of gods. She is permitted to marry Pururavas on condition that she must not see him undressed. In other words when mist is directly exposed to solar rays it disappears. She must not see also her son (i.e., water). In both cases she had to leave her husband. After marriage both live happily for some time; but once Urvashi suspects her husband who looked at another water nymph (Apsaras) with some attention. She becomes jealous, and leaving Pururavas, runs into a jungle and is changed into a creeper; but by a certain magic touch she regains her human form. It is at this moment or sometime after that, the Rig-Vedic dialogue begins. She is addressed by Pururavas as follows:

"Ho! there, my heart! Stay, thou fierce-minded lady, let us speak and argue for a while together."

Urvashi: What with this speech shall I do. I have gone from thee like Ushas or early dawn. O Pururava, return to thy dwelling; like wind I am difficult to be captured.

Pururavas reminds her how she left him and blames Gandharvas who attracted his attention for deluding both. He mentions the names of those Apsaras who were companions of Urvashi, when she, in their company, was attacked by Rakshasas and rescued by Pururavas. Urvashi replies

and reminds Pururavas the kindness shown to him at his birth by heavenly maidens, and how rivers nursed him and gods gave him strength. This dialogue ends with a second request from Pururavas that she may return to him.

Besides this there are a number of other dialogues in the Vedas (*vide* Rig Veda X.10, VIII.100, I.179, X.28 IV. 18, X.86, III. 33, I. 165-170). There are also such dialogues in the Upanishads and in the Ramayana and Mahabharata some of which have supplied the plot for later dramatic works such as the celebrated Sakuntala. The Buddhist writings also contain dramatic dialogues. Patanjali (140 B. C.), author of the Mahabhashya, writing on the modes of describing an event, states about action without words, which means gestures. There is a Veda, named Gandharva or science of music and song, in which drama and dance are included. The originator of this Veda is supposed to be Bharata. Even Gods take part in plays and dance. The violent divine (Tandava) dance of Siva and tender (Lasya) dance of his wife are well-known.

AVESTA

The ancient Iranian form of worship perhaps was as elaborate as Indian. There was no building for worship. People used to assemble in a garden or on a high ground such as the top of a mountain or a hill. They appreciated natural beauty, cleanliness and calmness. Avestan hymns were recited or sung by more than one priest. There was no idol kept till the reign of Artaxerxes (a Chaemenian King) who under Babylonian and Egyptian influence had

started a form of image worship which did not last very long in Iran. Iranian paradise was the abode of music which is a proof that they appreciated it. In Rig-Veda there are dialogues, which could be taken as the beginnings of Indian drama, but in Avesta there are hymns containing one full dramatic scene (*Vide* Yasna 29, named Gatha Ahunavaiti), in which more than two persons speak. To picture the scene, we shall have to imagine a royal court, in which, Ahura Mazda is seated on His divine throne, surrounded by his ministers, the six Amesha Spentas or pure immortals. Gens-Urvan, the soul of the cow or the material world, enters the court of Ahura Mazda complaining about her miserable condition and seeking Ahura's help. Here the drama begins :

Gens-Urvan : To both of you (Gens-Tasan and Ahura Mazda), Gen-Urvan complains : Why have you created me? Who has fashioned me? Anger, praise and tyranny have oppressed me, and so outrage and power. There is no protector for me but one of you. (Therefore) prepare for me a great herdsman.

Gens-Tasan, addressing Asha : Who (should be appointed) chieftain over Thy creation, and who (shall be) Its protector and ruler (who might prove) to be the prosperer of the world everlasting through industry and activity? Whom (shall we recognise) its evolving and increase-bringing Lord? Who can beat back the passions wrought by evil men?

Asha (replies): There is not a helper unhostile to the king. Those yonder do not know how the good (should) act towards the weak.

Gens-Tasan : Of beings, the strongest to whose help I call.

Asha : Mazda knows best decrees which have been carried out in past by Devas and men, and those which will be carried out in future. The command of Ahura will decide. Therefore let it be as (He) shall will.

Gens-Tasan: Then, with uplifted hands, I and pregnant cow, both let us pray to Ahura. We two urge (His) wisdom for declaration that neither for the right living man nor for the cattle-breeder, be destruction from the wicked.

Ahura to Himself. Who knows the laws with wisdom? Indeed not a temporal nor spiritual head has been found in accordance with Asha.

Gens-Urvan and Gens-Tasan (addressing Vahu-manah): Whom among mortals, O Vahumana, does (thou know) to look after two of us?

Ahura (pointing to Zarathustra): Yes. This (man) has been found for me, who alone has heard our doctrine, (and he is) Zarathustra Spitama. Therefore, let us give him sweetness of speech.

This suggestion did not appeal to Gens-Urvan, who considered Zarathustra a weak mortal who could not protect her, and therefore Gens-Urvan and Gens-Tasan both lament and Gens-Urvan says: "Am I to be content with a powerless protector with (his ineffectual) words of a weak man. I desire one mighty ruler."

Zarathustra (after his nomination) Where (are) Asha, Vahu-mana, and Xsathra. O mortals! Consent to the great gift for instruction through Mazda.

Spoke Zarathustra : When shall I get purity, pure thoughts and control,

O Ahura?

All assembled say : Through Ahura, now bring us aid ; let us be of service to you.

Here ends Yasna 29, which if properly recited may be staged into one complete act.

QUORAN

Among the incidents relating to the lives of the Prophets narrated in the Quoran, some, such as the incidents of the life of Joseph, Jesus and Abraham, are in the form of stories resembling the style of the Books of Job and Ruth in the Bible, while others such as Moses and his adventures are dramatic in composition. The story of Moses as mentioned in Quoran can be arranged in six or seven acts. I shall omit the first, the birth and growth of Moses, and begin with the second.

Let us imagine Moses, young, strong and healthy, after journeying a long distance through a great desert of a semi-peninsula, arrives at a place close to a village where there are few trees. Some herdsmen are drawing water from a well for their cattle. Moses takes shelter under a tree. His attention is drawn towards two shy young girls, waiting for their turn and standing on one side of the road.

Moses (addressing them): What is the matter with you?

A girl: We cannot get water until shepherd take away their cattle, and our father is very old and so he cannot come with us.

Moses draws water from the well, and after thus helping them, retires to his place. The two girls along with their cattle return home and report to their father about the young stranger. They are asked by

him to invite Moses to be his guest. One of them returns and bashfully says: "My father invites you, so that he may give you the reward for watering our sheep."

Moses accepts the invitation, and following her, arrives at the house of an old gentleman, named Shuaib and narrates his past circumstances.

Shuaib: Do not fear. You are free from the unjust people.

A girl: O father! employ him. He is the best of those whom you can employ, being strong and honest.

Shuaib (to Moses): I desire to marry one of those two, my daughters, to you, on condition that you may serve eight years; and if you care to complete ten, it will be (left to) your free will, and I do not wish to be hard upon you. God willing, you will find me one of the good.

Moses: This shall be the agreement between you and me: Either of those two periods of time, if I fulfil, there shall be no pressure to me, and God is a witness of what we say.

This act ends here. Next we meet Moses in the desert, close to Senai mountain, in mid-winter. Cold is severe. Looking for fire, Moses perceives a light on the side of the mountain and expecting it to be fire or a hut with a lamp, speaks to his wife.

Moses: Wait, I perceive a fire, I shall go towards the light and may find and bring to you a live coal, or if the light is a lamp in a hut, through its owner I may be guided to the place where I can get fire.

Arriving at this place, he saw a light on a tree, but neither man nor fire; and he heard a divine voice as if coming from the side of the fire.

Divine voice: O Moses! Put off your shoes. You are in the sacred valley of Tuva, and I have chosen you to bear my message. Therefore, hearken to what I reveal. I am God. There is no God but I. Serve me (alone) and keep up prayer for my remembrance. The hour (of human, true self-consciousness) will come sometime in future. I am about to keep it a mystery in this life, so that every soul may by free will do its activity and be rewarded according to merit, and as it strives. What is this in your hand, O Moses?

Moses: This is my staff (metaphorically power of argument) on which I recline, and by it I make leaves to fall from tree upon my sheep, and there are (many) other uses of it for me.

Divine voice: Throw it, O Moses!

Moses obeys the command, and after casting it, he sees that it becomes a great and powerful moving serpent.

Divine voice: Be not afraid; take it; we will restore it to its former state. Go to Pharaoh, he has exceeded his limits.

Moses: O my lord! Expand my breast and make easy my responsibility. Loose the knot from my tongue, so that my hearer may understand my speech. Make an assistant to my important duty from my family. Harun is my brother. Strengthen my back by him. Associate him in my mission, so that we two may glorify Thee and remember Thee often.

Divine voice: Your request is granted, O Moses, and I have chosen you for myself. Go you and (your) brother with my signs, and do not

neglect in remembering me. Go both to Pharoah; he has rebelled, but speak in gentle speech. Perchance he may mind or fear.

Moses and Harun : O Lord, we fear that he may do evil to us or he may exceed the limit of his tyranny.

Divine voice: Be not afraid, I am with you, I hear and I see.

Here ends the act. Next we see a royal court. Pharoah is seated on his lofty throne, surrounded by his ministers, officers and learned men or magicians. Enter Moses and Harun. They speak, addressing the king.

Moses : We two are messengers of thy Lord. Therefore send with us sons of Israel, and do not torment them. We have brought to you a sign from your Lord, and peace be on him who follows this guidance.

Pharoah : Who is your Lord, O Moses ?

Moses : Our Lord is He who created everything, and then guides them to reach perfection.

Pharoah : Then what about the state of those human beings who lived in former generation ?

Moses : It (state of former generations, to what stage of human perfection they reached) is with my God in a book (of nature) in which my Lord errs not, nor He forgets. My Lord is He who brings together the means of human existence, who has created this earth for you and has expanded it and in it has made for you ways and has sent down water from the cloud, so that we cause growth of vegetables of various kinds. From matter we created you, and into matter we shall send you back, and out of matter we shall raise you a second time.

Pharoah could not argue more and so sought force, which is the characteristic of the human being when he is defeated in right reasoning. He tries to gain his object by wrong means and by force.

Pharoah : Have you come to turn us out from our land by your magic, O Moses ? Then, we also will produce for you magic like yours. Make an appointed time between us and you that we may meet—which we will not break, nor you should—in a central place.

Moses : Your day of meeting is the day of the festival when let people assemble in the early forenoon.

This act ends. Next we must imagine an open place, where people in large numbers (like Yatras in India) have assembled. Pharoah arrives with ministers, officers and wise men or magicians. On one side stand two men, Moses and Harun.

Wise men or magicians (addressing Pharoah): Will there be reward for us, if we are the vanquishers (i.e., human being does nothing but for gaining something) ?

Pharoah : Yes, and you will become exalted and be my near officer.

Moses : Woe to you ! Do not forge a lie against God (truth), and if you do so, He will destroy you by a punishment. He who forges a lie, he fails to attain (his object, i.e., truth).

Magicians (to each other): These two are magicians, who wish to turn you out from your land by their magic and to take away your best religion. (Then addressing Moses): O Moses, either you will cast or we should be the first to cast (i.e., you

begin your argument or we should start).

Moses: Rather you cast first.

They cast their rods and cords, and these appear as if moving and running (i.e. wrong reasoning through power of eloquence is made to appear true). Moses conceives fear in his mind but the Divine voice or voice of right conscience encourages him, and he is inspired to cast his staff (argument) which he does, and it swallows all apparent serpents. Magicians become convinced of the truth of the message and of the doctrine of Moses, confess their defeats, and joining together say, prostrating:

Magicians: We believe in the Lord of Harum and Moses.

Pharaoh: You believed in his teaching before I gave permission; therefore he must be your chief who has taught you magic. I shall cut your hands and feet from behind, and then I shall crucify you on the trunks of the palm-tree, and then you will know which of us (I or Moses) is more severe in punishment and more abiding in power.

Magicians: We cannot prefer your claim to what has come to us through Moses of clear arguments, and we turn to Him, who created us. Therefore you may pass on us what you wish. You can do to us that which is connected with this material life. We believe in our God, so that He may forgive us our shortcomings; and we believe that the magic which you forced us to practise is false and God is (indeed) better and most abiding.

Thus ends this act. The last scene is the death of Pharaoh and destruction of his army and emancipation of Bani Israil. These are incidents of the life of Moses narrated in Quoran in dramatic style and so arranged that without any addition or omission, it may be even staged. The language is most beautiful. All is prose, but some lines resemble blank verse of Shakespearean dramas and convey a high moral and philosophical sense.

Yet I must repeat that the Prophet never had any idea of drama in connection with these passages.

THE BASES OF SPIRITUAL ENDEAVOUR

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, formerly Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is at present preaching the message of Vedanta in different countries of Central Europe. The following are the notes of his class talks at Wiesbaden, Germany, which will appear as a serial in the *Vedanta Kesari* for sometime. This is the third instalment.]

I

THE ideal must be fixed and clear before beginning with one's Sadhana. That is what is needed. We must have a very definite idea of the path and a definite idea of the

goal to be attained, i.e., the goal of life. So long as we allow ourselves to be vague and dreamy, hazy in all our feelings and doings, no progress is felt; and there is a continual conflict in us, which prevents most peo-

ple from advancing even a single step towards the goal. There is too much shallow, superficial thinking, shallow feeling, shallow willing and acting, without any really deeper urge, without any definite clear-cut purpose, without any deeper awareness.

We should have the ideal fixed that neither worldly nor heavenly pleasures are our goal, that the only goal is self-realisation, neither this world, nor heaven, nor any other world. Heavenly enjoyment is no better than earthly enjoyment, and so long as there is a hankering after heavenly enjoyment we can never attain the goal. Heaven is a very cheap thing after all.

We cannot lead the worldly life and the higher life at the same time. We cannot allow ourselves to run after worldly love and affections and have the higher divine love at the same time. God and worldly affections, God and worldly passion and pleasure, cannot live together. "Where Kama is, there Rama cannot be; where Rama is, there Kama cannot be."

Before we actually begin our spiritual life in real earnest, we must decide if we are really fully prepared to pay the price. Generally there are two tendencies, a worldly tendency, and a spiritual tendency in us. If both are more or less equally strong at the beginning, one must be strengthened; otherwise there will be no progress, and the tug-of-war going on in ourselves can never be overcome. That is why it is absolutely necessary for us to fix once for all our ideal, our conduct in life, and then stick to it whatever happens. If you really wish to follow the difficult path beset with so many pit-falls

and dangers, you must also be prepared to overcome all the difficulties. If we wish to transcend all the unrealities, there must always be a certain amount of the dare-devil in us, a certain amount of fearlessness and true heroism. The path of the aspirant is a very dangerous path; dangers and pitfalls are lurking everywhere, on all sides; and if once caught, there is no more chance for many people. Unless you sacrifice all your worldly desires and your sense of I-ness, you can never realise the higher ideal.

"Give us discrimination, give us renunciation, give us devotion and knowledge."

II

Religion is something different from and something more than book-knowledge. Nor is mere eclecticism religion. Now-a-days books are available everywhere, books on all religions, bringing the message of different religions in different forms. But through mere scholarship, through mere intellectual study, you can never learn the Truth. When we think too much and too highly of intellectual life, we can never realise the essential truths of religion. "He is one; sages call Him by different names."

"Let one study as well as he can, master the subjects, but after having become a great scholar, let him, like a child, become simple." Unless we become simple, there can never be any spiritual life. One must be free from all guile, from all falsehood, from all secrecy and all lack of uprightness, from all the perversities of the mind, if one wants to make any progress. One must be upright, perfectly sincere, frank, and a man of meditation. Having known the essentials of

spiritual life, having formed a clear conception of the Divine, you should try to practise the disciplines. Do not read too many empty words. That only creates disturbance and trouble. "The net of words is like a forest, and so one loses one's way in it, in this forest of mere words. Mere study of words and merely explaining these scriptures, all with bombastic words, is not for emancipation, but for enjoyment" (Sankaracharya).

Now this does not mean that we should not go in for studies, but we should make it a point to study with a view to realise the Truth. Study is always encouraged in Vedanta, but along with your studies there must be some real spiritual practice day by day. You must always train your intellect and have your fixed studies, think deeply on the problems, read books, and form a habit of clear thinking and deep studies so that you would feel uncomfortable the day that you have not studied any book deeply, pondering over it and over the truths it contains. This daily study is to be made an important item of your Sadhana.

III

Sri Ramakrishna's message is : Be spiritual and realise the Truth yourself. By living the spiritual life, we can make the Divine living in our own life. In the human being the passions, usually carnality and greed play the greatest part, and the Master shows us how we may overcome sex and greed—these our greatest obstacles on the path of spiritual progress. He wishes us to have a new outlook towards ourselves and others, men and women. Man as well as woman must have the Divine outlook

and not think of themselves in terms of sex and body. They should never think of the body, but rise above all thoughts of sex in themselves and in others. This is the most vital point to note for the spiritual aspirant. And the modern age needs this message more than anything else. The instruction the Master gives was first of all realised in his own life and in the life of the Holy Mother. Without purity there can be no spiritual life. Seeing the Divine in oneself and in all others, men and women, is the only solution for the world-problem of sex and the relation between the sexes. Seeing the Divine in all is the only practical solution, and the present age needs this more than any other age ever did. 'Lust and gold' is the sign of this age, because this age is pre-eminently one of sex and mammon-worship. So the Master had to go to the very extreme, had to deny sex and to deny gold and greed. The more one sees of Western life, the more one comes to understand the full significance of this message for all.

You can never rise above the sex idea by just hating woman or man, as many of the Christian mystics tried to do. Something more is needed. Even hatred is sex attraction, and nothing more. The Divine is in me, in all, in everything. I am not a man. I am not a woman, I am It. "It is by means of continence that, having found the Self, one meditates. That Self alone does not perish which one finds by means of perfect continence" (Chhandogya Upanishad). "It is by continence that one who knows reaches the world of Brahman. It is by means of continence that one, having worshipped the Lord, and having wish-

ed for the Self, reaches the Self. The Self which one finds by unbroken continence never perishes. By means of continence one obtains the Supreme Self" (Sankaracharya). "The Infinite is Bliss ; there is no Bliss in what is finite. The Infinite alone is Bliss, and thou art That" (Chhandogya Upanishad). "Those who want to attain to the highest perfection through sacrifice and rites are like children crossing the ocean on rafts, an impossible task." This is an Upanishadic passage stressing the essentials of spiritual life. And the same has been stressed by Buddha also and by Christ and Krishna. Judaism has always been anti-monastic. Buddha, the Upanishads, Krishna, Christ, etc, have all been monastic in their essential teachings.

IV

It was the mission of Buddha's life to ask people not to think too much of rites and ceremonies, but to make religion living in their own lives by leading a life of purity, meditation, spiritual discipline and mental control. Without being moral and leading a pure life we can never expect to become spiritual or to make any progress. All this then remains nothing but a fond dream.

What did Buddha say of God? He did not speak anything of God. It is not essential to speak of God so much, but far more essential is to follow God's path, to live the spiritual life. What is the use of saying, "O Lord, how beautiful Thou art ! How beautiful are Thy skies, Thy stars, this

whole creation !" The Creator is always greater than His creation and does not feel proud of such a small thing. Seen from our human standpoint we find it great, but to God it is a very small thing after all. So it is more important to follow God's path than to praise God eternally, without ever doing anything. This becomes mere lip-service. Once Buddha was asked, "Sir, is there a God ?". "Did I say there is a God ?" "Then is there no God, Sir?" "Did I say there is no God ?" Buddha wanted to stop all empty and hair-splitting speculations and make people do something. So he said, "When a house is on fire, do you just go and trace the origin of the fire or do you try to extinguish it ?" But we in our foolishness very often try to trace the origin first, and before we have succeeded in the attempt, the whole house is burnt down, and nothing but a heap of ashes remains. We must always stress the essentials of spiritual life. Sri Ramakrishna said, "The jackal has everywhere the same cry, no matter in what country." And on another occasion he said, "I just cook the food and put it before your mouth, but then you will not even take the trouble of eating it."

We always want everything to be done for us by somebody else. There can be no vicarious salvation without any self-effort on the part of the aspirant. Most of the so-called religious people are mere parasites in the world of religion and spiritual life. It would be better for them to take up something else.

CULT OF FORCE IN CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

By Brahmachari Sudha Krishna

[The following is a brief study of the forces that threaten human society with disruption to-day.]

THE devils in men have been suddenly released, and the world to-day witnesses their ring-dance. The motif of the age to which we belong is, therefore, the cult of force. The present scramble for power and possessions among the different nations of the world illustrates the point. A review of the current events of the world will clarify the issue.

The present international situation is growing more and more complex and kaleidoscopic in its daily moves. From China to Peru, in the face of every nation can be clearly discerned a feverish uncertainty and a panicky preparation for an impending war. Reviewing the present international chaos, Mr. Baldwin, the late Prime Minister of England, significantly observed that though he would not lean on pessimism yet at times he felt that he was living in a madhouse. The findings of all critical observers universally converge to one point, namely, that the world will soon fall victim to another conflagration of a great war, much more destructive than its predecessor.

Over two decades back, the last World War broke out. A very pertinent question, therefore, arises as to why within such a brief span of time we are to witness the recurrence of another war? The League of Nations was inaugurated after the conclusion of the war. Visionaries dreamt that the League would bring in a new

order of things. They saw in it an effective nucleus for the consummation of a world unity based on amity and concord. They fervently hoped that war would disappear into the limbo of the past, that imperialism would make its exit from the face of the globe. But recent happenings have proved otherwise, and they have been terribly shocked at their tragic disillusionment. The other day the whole world was pained to see the tragic fate of Abyssinia in the broad daylight of the 20th century. The League grinned at Italy's conduct. The irony of the whole thing was that while the members of the League were dividing themselves into various committees, Italy finished her job. Promoters of international peace were flabbergasted at this shameless vacillation of the League. Romain Rolland had aptly insinuated the activities of the League as sheer buffooneries.

The world is at present weltering in a chronic chaos. The genesis of it can be found in the conduct of the victorious Allied Powers in the last war. In the last war we know, Germany was shorn of all her foreign possessions. England as an important member of the Allied Powers manipulated to obtain the lion's share of the spoils of the war. Italy, though a victorious member, was highly dissatisfied at the distribution of the booties. She declared that her prizes were not commensurate with her sac-

rifices. In short Italy fulminated against England and France as her desire to have a colony in Africa was not fulfilled.

Under the leadership of her dictator Mussolini, new life has been instilled into Italy. She is no longer a mere 'geographical expression' as Metternich cynically spoke of her in the Congress of Vienna (1815). The post-war Italy is basking in the resurgence of an animated hope and a newly kindled imagination. The mighty Roman Empire of the past constantly appears before the mind's eyes of the Italians. They dream of the return of the departed glory and splendour of their fatherland. The annexation of Abyssinia is, in their angle of vision, only a thin end of the wedge.

The conquest of Abyssinia has partially satisfied the Italian hunger for new lands. But what of Germany? The Allies thought that Germany would bow her head in ignominy, never to rise again. But she has, to the surprise of her enemies, set at naught their high expectations. She has again rearmed herself to such an extent that now she is in a mood to defy the whole world. The cult of force is one of the basic factors of German culture. Her national poet Goeth had sung "I have been a man and that means a fighter". Her philosopher Hegel glorifies war when he says, "The health of a State generally displays itself not in the calm of peace, but in the movement of war." Trietschke who combined in himself the genius of a historian and a philosopher spoke highly of the moral majesty of war. He declared thus: "The hope of driving war out of the world is not only senseless, it is deep-

ly immoral." The martial spirit of Germany has not suffered an iota by her last defeat. The present Germany under Hitler is still preaching the gospel of valour and worshipping the religion of force.

Herr Hitler is also a great believer in the potency of force which, according to his firm conviction, will enable Germany to win over her lost dominions. The Fuhrer in his autobiography "My struggle" solemnly declares that 'it must be thoroughly understood that the lost lands will never be won back by solemn appeals to good God, nor by pious hopes in any League of Nations, but only by force of arms.' Inspired again by Hitler in this cult of force, Germany of to-day has become more powerful than Germany that threw down its challenge to the civilised world in the dark days of 1914—1918. The conquest of Austria is, therefore, only a promising beginning of a glorious end.

While Germany and Italy are reasserting themselves, Spain, the terror of the 16th century Europe, is weakening itself by falling a prey to a disastrous civil war. The Spanish imbroglio has drawn the different nations of Europe in open warfare, and has provided an occasion for a pitched battle between the socialists and the fascists of the world. Spain is still continuing to be the theatre of international mercenarism.

The aggrandisement of Italy and Germany cannot possibly be stopped except in an open war. England may protest, failing which, she may woo them. Italy and Germany by way of retort echo the sentiment of the great statesman who proclaimed, "Great Britain has by force annexed

one-fifth of the globe. She cannot have more. So she is now preaching to us the moral law against the villainy of force."

While the West is becoming more and more restless due to the operation of this cult of force, the East is not lagging behind. China has assumed first class importance as the battleground of rival imperialist powers. It is here that the rival systems of capitalism and socialism are likely to try their strength. Infatuated by imperialistic designs, Japan has subjected China to fall under her vandalism.

The recent movements in the international chessboard reveal a fact of deep significance; it is the fusion of nationalism and imperialism. Imperialism may be described as a crude expression of the cult of force. To make it appear as something sublime, imperialism is hiding itself in nationalism. It reminds us of the prophetic utterance of Trotsky who wrote in 'Foreign Affairs' in 1934. "The fact is that the breeding places of nationalism are the laboratories of terrific conflicts in the future; like a hungry tiger imperialism has withdrawn into its own national lair to gather itself for a new leap."

Thus all the world over, the cult of force reigns supreme and with disastrous consequences. Democratic principles and institutions governed by this cult have now been fully exploded, and they are all proved to be a vicious fraud and a poisonous pretence. Democracy is now a corpse, and just to perform an autopsy, as it were, Bernard Shaw speaks of it thus: "Democracy exhibits the vanity of Louis XIV, the savagery of Peter of Russia, the nepotism and provincial-

ity of Napoleon, the fickleness of Catherine II; in short, all the childishness of all the despots without any of the qualities that enabled the greatest of them to fascinate and dominate their contemporaries." If democracy prove a failure, its substitute, dictatorship, holds no prospect of relief. On the contrary, in dictatorship the doctrine of force has reached its acme.

Such is the repercussion of the cult of force that in the modern era States have degenerated into a bedlam of politics. Political exigencies have necessitated the ironing out of the variety of men's mind. Morality is being condemned as the invention of the weak to neutralise the strength of the strong. Equality is being tabooed as a dream, a desire sponsored solely by the defeated and disinherited. All talks of peace and justice are denounced as flatulent nonsense. These provide us, therefore, with a lurid spectacle of the world, and so long as the cult of force remains in saddle, the world must roll in a paroxysm of despair. Rabindranath deftly paints the present situation in the following lines: "The age to which we belong, does it not still represent night in the human world, a world asleep, whilst individual races are shut up within their own limits, calling themselves nations? Does not all these represent the dark age of civilisation, and have we not begun to realise that it is the robbers who are out and awake?" Thus attainment of power and not achievement of perfection has now become the goal of humanity. George Elliot would have to revise the opinion she once expressed: "I too rest in faith, that man's perfection is the crowning flower, toward which

the urgent sap in life's great tree is pressing."

The statesmen and diplomats of different countries are the very robbers who are out and awake, and who are primarily responsible for leading the whole heritage of civilisation virtually to extinction. They remind us one of the sayings of the Chinese sage, Confucius :

"Some men I know

Who infest the realm with their slanderous lies.

Their hatred and spite they will not restrain,

So confusion, malice and mischief reign."

The world badly needs to-day the removal of these types of men notorious for spreading 'confusion, malice and mischief.' It also urgently needs the emergence of another type of humanity which has the power to sublimate this cult of force into the gospel of love, and according to the Confucian maxim, 'fix the mind on truth, cling to virtue and give play to loving-kindness'. The motto of life of the members of this new type of humanity must be, "All men within four seas are my brothers." How long shall we wait for their arrival so that the world may be extricated from this slough of despair ?

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

SUTRA 21.

यथा व्रजगोपिकानाम् ।

यथा such as व्रजगोपिकानाम् of the Gopies of Vraja.

21. Such indeed was the Love of the Gopies of Vraja.

Note. Every *Bhakta* holds up these illiterate copies of Vrindavan as the paragons of *Bhakti*. The Lord himself says in *Bhagavata* X.32.22 : "I cannot sufficiently reward your devoted service even through the grant of long life in heaven,—the service of you who have resorted to and worshipped Me, conceiving a pure and faultless relation towards Me, and

having cut asunder the very hard ties of domestic life. May your righteousness be its fullest reward ;" again in *Bhagavata* X.46. 4 to 6 : "They have given their heart and soul to Me. They consider Me their very life, and for My sake they have abandoned their nearest relatives. I always support those who, for My sake, give up all worldly advantages and pleasures. When I, the most beloved of lovable objects, am at a distance, the women of Gokula ever think of Me and remain lost to all worldly interests owing to extreme anxiety caused by separation. Somehow with great difficulty the Gopies,

who have set their heart and soul on Me, are supporting their lives on messages of my return to them ;" again in XI.12.12 and 13 : " With their minds fixed on Me through love, they knew neither their kinsmen, nor their bodies, nor things far and near, as sages in the superconscious state know not name and form—like unto rivers merging in the waters of the ocean. Not knowing My real nature, the Gopies who were ignorant women desired Me as their sweetheart (in the beginning), yet they attained Me, the supreme Brahman, by hundreds and thousands through the power of holy association." Again Uddhava says in Bhagavata X.47.61 and 62, " How blessed should it be to live in Vrindavan as one of the shrubs or creepers or plants or herbs that come in contact with the dust of the feet of these Gopies who abandoned their kinsmen and the path of the noble-born which is so hard to give up, and resorted to the feet of Mukunda, sought after by the Vedas—these Gopies who embraced the lotus feet of the glorious Krishna set on their bosom in the Rasa-dance and were rid of all worldly ills." Again in Bhagavata X.44.15 the woman of Madhura speak of the Gopies thus, " Blessed are the women of Vraja who, while milking, pounding, churning, washing, rocking cradles, lulling their crying babes, sprinkling or cleansing, sing in praise of Hari with a devoted and loving heart ; whose throats are choked with tears, and whose mind, devoted to Him, brings them every blessing."

Again within historical times also the love of the Gopies for Krishna has been the theme of song and art. The Vaishnavite Alvars got their inspiration from this love of the Gopies. The

Vaishnavite teachers of North India like Nimbarka, Jayadeva, Gouranga, Vallabha, etc. founded their theology on this Vrindavana Leela. Even in modern days we find Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda waxing eloquent and poetic on this topic. Sri Ramakrishna often used to fall into Samadhi whenever he heard or thought of the Gopies. Once he remarked, " The devotion of the Gopies is the devotion of love, constant, unmixed and unflagging." So also Swami Vivekananda remarks, " Gopicleela is the acme of religion of love in which individuality vanishes and there is communion. It is in this Leela that Sri Krishna shows what He preaches in the Gita : ' Give up everything for Me.' Go and take shelter under Vridavan Leela to understand Bhakti."

But there are not wanting people who cannot see anything in this except sex-passion. Even the worthy Parikshit could not understand it, and in Bhagavata X.29.12, he raises the doubt : " They knew Him only as their sweetheart, not as Para Brahman. How could it be then that those whose thoughts are swayed by Gunas could escape the current of Gunas." Suka tries to clear the doubt by pointing out that what matters is concentration of mind on Hari, whether through feeling of hatred or love or fear. Bhagavan Himself supports the view in Bhagavata XI.9.22. Parikshit does not seem to be satisfied, for he raises the question again. This time he asks how the Bhagavan could descend so low as to cater to the sex cravings of the Gopies. Sri Suka takes shelter this time under the excuse that divine beings should not be judged by human standards.

Vide Bhagavata X.33.30 to 38. The real answer to this doubt raised by Parikshit is given by Sri Krishna Himself first in his talk to the Gopies in Bhagavata X.22.26, where He points out that even the lower desires of those who approach Him for their satisfaction are like the grain which is fried and boiled and cannot, therefore, grow into a plant. Such is the wonderful effect of association with an extraordinarily holy personality or Incarnation like Krishna; for the dynamic influence of such a being can transform even the vulgar desires into the holy passion of Bhakti. That this fact of the Gopies realising Brahman, even though they first approached Krishna as their sweetheart, is solely due to the power of holy association, is again emphasised by Krishna in Bhagavata X.12.13.

Swami Vivekananda says in his lecture on 'The Sages of India' regarding the loving devotion of the Gopies: "There are not wanting fools, even in the midst of us, who cannot understand the marvellous significance of that miraculous of episodes. There are, let me repeat, impure fools even born of our blood who try to shrink from that, as if from something impure. To them, I have only one thing to say: first make yourself pure, and you must remember that he who tells the story of the love of the Gopies is one who is born pure, the eternally pure Suka, son of Vyasa. So long as there is selfishness in the heart, so long is the love of God impossible Forget first this love for gold and name and fame, and for this little trumpery world of ours. Then and then only you will understand the

love of the Gopies, too holy to be attempted without giving up everything, too sacred to be understood until the soul has become perfectly pure. People with ideas of sex and of money and of fame bubbling up every minute in their heart, daring to criticise and understand the love of the Gopies! This is the very essence of the Krishna Incarnation."

Thus it is clear on the evidence of these pure souls who can be expected to pronounce an opinion on the subject, that the love of the Gopies, even though it began in the lower plane, rose up to the highest plane of selfless love to God, and as such, in the final stages it deserves to be considered the highest acme of perfection in Bhakti.

In the following three Sutras, Narada also tries to point out how their Bhakti could be distinguished from profane love.

SUTRA 22.

तत्रापि न माहात्म्यज्ञानविस्मृत्यपवादः

तत्रापि even here माहात्म्यज्ञानविस्मृत्यपवादः the charge of forgetting the glory of the Lord न does not hold good.

22. Even¹ here, the charge that they did not recognize the divine glory of the Lord does² not hold good.

Note. 1. *Even here*—Even though their love for Krishna is delineated poetically in the language of human love, and so liable to be misunderstood by the vulgar.

2. *Does not hold good*—People who are carried away by the human imagery fail to note the fact that the Gopies did not love Krishna as a man but as the Divine. Passage

after passage in the Bhagavata bears witness to this fact. Thus X.29.30, 32, 36 and 37 say: "It is not fit for Thee to speak so cruelly to us who have abandoned us. Accept us as servants devoted to Thy feet. Pray, do not abandon us, accept us as your devoted servants. O Lord whom nobody can win over, accept us, just as the Supreme Deity, the Omniscient Person, does those who seek after release. O beloved one, Thou that knowest the secret of Dharma, sayest Thou that the natural duty of women consists in being true, obedient and useful to their husbands, children and well-wishers? May this be so in Thy own case; for Thou art the most beloved one, the kinsman, the master and the self of all embodied creatures. O Ambujaksha and the most beloved of those that live in the forest, from the moment we touched Thy feet, the delight of Lakshmi, though it be but once, and were blessed by Thee, we are unable to stand before any other. Though Lakshmi has always a place on Thy bosom, yet she covets with Tulasi the dust on Thy lotus feet sought after and worshipped by all Thy servants—Lakshmi, for whose gracious glances all the other gods make their efforts. Similarly we have sought the dust of Thy feet." Again in X.31.4 and 5, the Gopies say, "Thou art not the son of Gopika; Thou art the witness in the hearts of all creatures invested with a body. Prayed to by the four-faced Brahma, Thou hast appeared in the house of Satwatas for the sustenance of the universe. Place on our head Thy gracious lotus-like palm that promises fearless heaven to those that seek refuge from this fearful world—the palm which espoused

the hand of Sri who bestows all desires."

All the above quotations and many more show clearly that the Gopies were not after a human lover, but after the Paramatman himself.

SUTRA 23

तद्विहीनं जागणामिव ॥ २३ ॥

(यदि) तद्विहीनं had they been lacking in this knowledge of Krishna जागणां that of a mistress इव like.

23. Had they lacked this knowledge of the divinity of the object of their love, their love would have been similar to the base passion of a mistress for her paramour.

Note:—This is one point of difference between earthly passion and divine love or Bhakti, viz., that the love is directed not towards a human lover but towards God. And that makes a tremendous difference as Sandilya also points out in Sutra 21 of the Bhakti-Mimamsa. Another point of difference is also noted by Narada in the next Sutra.

SUTRA 24.

नास्मेव तस्मिन् तत्सुखसुखित्वम् ॥ २४ ॥

तस्मिन् in that profane love of the mistress for her paramour तत्सुखसुखित्वं happiness in the happiness of the other नास्मेव there is not.

24. In that profane love of the mistress for paramour, the happiness of the former does not consist in the happiness of her paramour.

Note:—The mistress is utterly selfish. She loves the paramour only because of the enjoyment he can give

her. She does not care for the happiness of her paramour. In pure love or Bhakti, there is no trace of selfishness at all. The lover does not at all care for his own happiness but is willing to give up all his own happiness for making his beloved happy. Here in the case of the Gopies also,

they did not love Krishna for any selfish motive. They were ready to give up everything to make Him happy. Their happiness depended only on His happiness. This Sutra, therefore, brings out the second great difference between Bhakti and sex love, *viz.*, utter selflessness.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Jivan-Mukti-Viveka or The Path to Liberation-in-this-life : By *Vidyaranya*. Edited with Sanskrit text and an English translation by Pandit S. Subrahmanya Sastri, F. T. S., and T. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, B.A., L.T. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pages 163 and 236. Price Rs. 6.

The nature of the attainments of the soul which has reached the final goal and end of all spiritual striving is a question of momentous importance in all schools of mysticism and to all aspirants who struggle in the path of spirituality. On the definition of this *summum bonum* depends more or less the kind of discipline that is prescribed for the striving soul. Vidyaranya in his Jivan-Mukti-Viveka has tried to expound clearly the teaching of Vedanta on this important question, basing his arguments on authoritative texts and elucidating their import in precise terms.

One of the common dangers in the spiritual path consists in a too easy assumption on the part of the aspirants that the stage they have reached is final; they mistake the intermediate stations for the terminus. They thus get stuck up, and fall easily into comfortable intellectual convictions. An understanding, therefore, of the various stages of liberation and the attendant characteristics of each stage and the disciplines that appertain to each, is indispensable to seekers, the more so for those who have gone far along the path than to beginners, for whom, perhaps, a rough outline may not be quite insufficient. Vidyaranya has undertaken to do this task for us and laid all aspirants on the path under a deep debt of gratitude.

According to the author the final state is reached only by the complete destruction of all desires and latent impressions which form the bondage of Samsara, along with the vehicle, the mind itself. Study, reasoning and contemplation pursued in any of the Ashramas or orders of life rent the veil of ignorance that covers the Self of man, and give him glimpses of the majesty and natural freedom and purity of the soul as well as of the illusive nature of the objective universe. This enlightenment marks a great stage of advance, but only a stage. Many an aspirant stops here without gaining the full enjoyment of the fruition of the mature spiritual life. As a flame exposed to the winds can never be steady and is liable to be put out, so is the gnosis or Jnana, which is not fortified by the destruction of the Vasanas and the dissolution of the mind, liable to be disturbed. Yoga, therefore, is indispensable if the illumined soul is to enjoy the full freedom and bliss of liberation-in-this-life and of complete enlightenment. Continued and uninterrupted resting in one's own real nature, undistracted by any thought of social duties and conventions and scriptural observances or even of the care of one's own body, any of which may mar the intense concentration on the Self, is enjoined in this period until to the Yogi Paramahansa the whole of the objective universe, including his personal identity, is dissolved or gets engulfed in the Transcendental Reality, his real Self. Life or death is no more his concern; the psycho-physical organism behaves as the forces or Pranas, of course determined by their previous modes of momentum, manipulate it in their own way. This alone is liberation-in-life.

Vidyaranya holds *Vidvat Sannyasa* or renunciation on the part of the enlightened as indispensable for most souls, while the renunciation of the seeker or *Vividisha Sannyasa* is optional though it would undoubtedly facilitate the struggle for enlightenment. The only condition for renunciation is *Vairagyam* or dispassion for the world, no matter whether one has or has not passed through any of the other *Ashramas*. Nor would he allow any laxity of discipline or non-conformity to the prescribed modes or formalities of the *Ashrama* life to the *Sannyasin* except in proportion to the advance he has made to the final state.

Such is the main trend of the ideas that run through the five chapters of the book in which the author has disentangled many a knotty point in the understanding of the scriptures. The treatment is rather formal and technical. The introduction has given a fine resume of the book, and would be found very helpful by the reader. The translation is both readable and reliable. The translators and publishers of the book deserve the warm congratulations and thanks of all interested in the promotion and diffusion of ideas for practical spiritual life.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Swami Nikhilananda's return from America

Swami Nikhilananda, Head and Founder of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York, has returned to India for a short visit. He arrived at Howrah on the 12th June. He was sent to America as a preacher of Vedanta from the Belur Math in 1931. After working for over a year at the Vedanta Society of Providence (Rhode Island), he came to New York, where he founded the above centre in 1933. He has achieved great success in spreading the universal message of Vedanta among the American public. The Swami visited Europe twice and delivered lectures on Vedanta in different countries. He is staying at the Belur Math.

*

Swami Satprakashananda's first year in America

On March 8, 1937, Swami Satprakashananda landed in New York City where he was met by the Swamis of Providence and New York Vedanta Centres, and the same day took a train with Swami Akhilananda for Providence, Rhode Island, where he was to begin his work in the United States. Many students were at the station to meet them when they arrived in the evening, and went with them to the Vedanta Centre for an informal gathering in honour of the occasion.

On Sunday, March 14th, began the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday, and at the evening service the Swami delivered his first message. He was introduced by Swami Akhilananda and spoke of "Sri Ramakrishna the Master, the Meaning of His Life." His talk was enjoyed and appreciated by all. Swami Nikhilananda of the New York Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre was also present and gave an address. The next evening he was present at the functions of the Boston Centre and spoke of "The Inspiration of Sri Ramakrishna." The night following, a dinner was held at the Providence Centre which was attended by many students and friends, and the Swami delivered a talk on "The Significance of the Master's Message." Two days later he returned to Boston to be present at a dinner and again spoke on Sri Ramakrishna to the people there, thus bringing to a close the festivities of the week.

Then he conducted the work in Providence in the absence of Swami Akhilananda who had gone on a short visit to Chicago. He also held the Palm Sunday evening services, expounding passages of the Bible, giving new insight to the last days in the life of Jesus on this earth.

On the 27th of March he visited the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre in New York as the guest of Swami Nikhilananda, and delivered an after-dinner speech at the birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna.

The following morning he spoke on "The Cultural Heritage of India," bringing to his American audience the background against which Sri Ramakrishna and the present Vedanta movement stand.

Early in April he again conducted the work in the Providence Centre during Swami Akhilananda's absence. On April 12th, he was invited to give his first talk over the radio, using for his topic, "The Ideal of Indian Womanhood."

On April 25th, he reopened the Vedanta work in the Nation's capital, Washington. Swami Akhilananda, the organizer of the work, introduced him to the audience. He gave a series of lectures at the Grafton Hotel on "The Practice of Yoga", "Is Death the End?," "The Secret of Power", and "The Search after Happiness," which were well attended. The people became interested in the ideas as presented by the Swami, and regular work was started in the hotel rooms. Tuesday meetings were held for the reading and explanation of the Gita, Thursdays for the exposition of Raja Yoga. After the talks, questions were asked and the Swami answered them at length. The subjects he chose for his Sunday lectures were such as: "The Mystic Word", introducing to the students the universal sound-symbol OM, "Mental Relaxation" bringing out its values for balance and poise, "Religion and the Miracle", and "The True Nature of Man." Among the audience some were showing enthusiasm for the work and came in close touch with the Swami. Classes continued to the beginning of June, at which time, due to the approaching summer heat, they were closed for the season.

From Washington he went to Chicago for a visit with the late lamented Swami Ganeswarananda. There he delivered two Sunday lectures in the Masonic Temple on "Spiritual Healing", and "The Technique of Meditation," before large gatherings. He also conducted a class on meditation and the Gita for the students. There were dinners and social gatherings to entertain the Swami while he was there. On his return trip to Providence he visited Niagra Falls. Then he stopped in New York City and spoke before the audiences in both the centres of the Ramakrishna Order. At the

end of June he returned to Providence, all activities being closed for the summer.

Swami Akhilananda sailed for India on August 27th, leaving Swami Satprakashananda in charge of his work in Providence. He opened the work with a Sunday night talk on "Spiritual Awakening," an inspiration after the summer lull. Besides Sunday lectures, there were two more services every week, discourses on the Gita, and the exposition of the Upanishads—the latter preceded by lessons on meditation. He began with a series of four illuminating Sunday night talks concerning the body, mind, and soul, showing their interrelation, proving the underlying existence of the soul, and indicating how we can realise it and hear "The Music of Soul," which formed the subject of the concluding lecture. Another interesting series of lectures were given by him on "The Social Life and Culture of India." The week of the Divine Mother's worship in October, he gave a talk on "The Meaning of Mother Worship" at the Vedanta Centre in Boston. In Providence he chose as his subject on the same occasion, "Is God our Mother?" In the middle of November, the Swami went to Chicago for a few days on receiving the sad news of Swami Ganeswarananda's death, to attend the funeral services with Swami Nikhilananda of New York.

In December and January the Swami gave a course of lectures on "The Practice of Meditation." These were followed by lectures on such other subjects as Intuition, Reason, Faith, and Instinct, and the Swami brought forcibly to the listener's attention with his characteristically clear presentation, the tools with which we have to work, and how to use them to the best advantage. Also during December there were several special services, commencing with the talk on "The Divine Incarnation" at the beginning of Christmas week. On Christmas Eve he read and commented on passages from the New Testament with deep understanding, revealing the significance of the Incarnation of Jesus. Late in the evening, a group of boys and girls with their pastor came to sing Christmas carols in which all joined. Refreshments were served, and everyone enjoyed the hospitality of the Swami as well as the joyous atmosphere of the occa-

sion. The following Sunday night he spoke on "The Blessed Life of Jesus" which terminated the Christmas season. December, 31st he spoke in honour of Holy Mother's birthday, reviewing her saintly life from childhood to later years, as the fulfilment of Indian womanhood.

New Year's day he was invited by Rabbi Goldman to speak at the opening session of a Parliament of Religions held at the Temple Emanuel on the occasion of its anniversary. He spoke on "What is Hinduism?" which was followed by questions from the audience, which were answered by the Swami. At the end of the lecture a young Jewish lady of Montreal, Canada, expressed a desire to be a Hindu. The Swami told her to be a Hindu in spirit rather than in name.

In February a few of the students gathered for a luncheon of Hindu food in honour of Swami Vivekananda's birthday. The sacramental food prepared by the Swami was relished by all as well as his vivid stories of the foremost disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. The next evening a special Sunday service was held, the Swami delivering an inspiring address on "Swami Vivekananda's Message to the Modern World." Refreshments cooked by the Swami were also served to the audience. He also gave an address on Swami Vivekananda at the Boston Centre during the celebration there. Then followed three more lectures on Swami Vivekananda dealing with his mission in America as the first Hindu teacher and founder of the Vedanta Movement in America. This led to a talk on "The Religion that America Needs," adeptly handled by the Swami as an analysis of the need of the country for the principles of Vedanta. Then followed a talk on "What is Vedanta?", the Swami expounding the essential character of Vedantic thought and culture. A special service was also held in February in honour of Swami Brahmananda's birthday when a talk was given on his life and great personality.

On the occasion of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday on the 4th of March, some students had a dinner of Hindu food prepared by the Swami, who later in the evening spoke on Sri Ramakrishna's birth and early life. The following Sunday he talked on "Sri Ramakrishna's Contact with Jesus". On Swami Akhilananda's return from India

on the 11th of March, Swami Satprakashananda brought to a close his first year's work in America, having endeared himself to all who came to know him, and who counted it a privilege to listen to his teachings.

The Ramakrishna Math Charitable Dispensary Mylapore, Madras

The report of the dispensary for the year 1937 shows the steady progress made by the institution since its inception in 1925. Its increasing usefulness to the poorer sections of the town is borne out by the enormous rise in the number of patients attending the dispensary from over 5,000 in 1926 to over 82,000 in 1937. During the year under review the dispensary rendered medical aids with great care and attention to no less than 29,241 new patients and undertook surgical operations in 2,206 cases, irrespective of caste, colour and creed. This figure together with the number of repeated cases, brings the total number of patients treated in the year to 82,011. The notable success has won for it the praise of some influential men, as we gather from extracts from the visitor's book.

Considering the immense utility and increasing rush of patients, the financial help received during the year is far from satisfactory.

In order to carry on the work efficiently, the management has to incur a monthly recurring expenditure of Rs. 250 for the maintenance of three workers, salary of a paid clerk, doctor's allowance, etc., besides the cost of purchasing drugs, bandages, etc., regularly for daily use. There is great need for extending its work, but this could not be done due to the financial position of the institution. The dispensary, therefore, stands in need of a general fund for its upkeep and maintenance of its workers and up-to-date modern appliances and other necessary outfits to render efficient medical relief to the poor, and to utilise the talents and experience of the doctors-in-charge.

We, therefore, appeal to the large-hearted men and women of the country to co-operate with the management and come forward with liberal contributions towards the service of the poor as Narayanas. Donors wishing to perpetuate the memory of their friends and relatives may do so by creating memorial endowments.

**The Ramakrishna Sevashram,
Shyamala Tal**

This institution situated in the Himalayas is the only source of medical relief to the helpless sufferers over a range of 30 miles. The hospital being located near the trade route between Tibet and the plains, it is of immense service to traders who often fall ill in jungles and at Tanakpur. It has also got arrangement for the treatment of dumb animals, such as cows, bullocks and buffaloes.

The Sevashram, during 23 years of its existence, rendered medical help to 31043 patients in all. During the year under review (1937) there were 3,559 outdoor and 33 indoor patients, both Hindus and Moham-medan, belonging to different parts of the district.

The institution is fulfilling a great want of the poor and helpless hill-people. The gradual expansion of the work has entailed great financial responsibility on it. So to put the work on a sound basis and make its service efficient, a permanent fund of Rs. 20,000 is urgently required. Contributions can be made in the form of permanent endowments of Rs. 1,000 toward the cost of a bed in the indoor department in memory of some near and dear one of the donors. Other contributions, too, will be thankfully accepted by the President, Ramakrishna Sevashram, Shyamalatal, Dt Almora.

**The Ramakrishna Mission Charitable
Dispensary, Belur**

The Mission Headquarters at Belur (Dt. Howrah), in addition to its various other activities, has been conducting, since the year 1913, a Charitable Dispensary at the Belur Math, with a view to alleviating the sufferings of the poor and the helpless patients in and around the locality. From very humble beginnings it has risen to be an important centre of medical relief in the district of Howrah. During the twenty-five years of its existence, it has treated

4,07,325 cases in all, of which 2,63,568 were new cases. The quality of service rendered by the doctors and other members of the staff attracts the poor sick people not only from Belur and adjoining places, but also from Salkia and Howrah, and from across the Ganges and beyond the Municipal limits.

The institution not only serves patients of all castes and communities with medicines, but also helps them in cases of need with diet, provides them with clothes and blankets when absolutely necessary, promptly refers serious cases to the best Hospitals, attends to women and children with special care and attends to urgent cases even at night.

The Dispensary treated 23,614 cases in 1937, as against 18,981 in the year before, showing an increase of nearly 25 per cent. The number of new cases in 1937 was 12,160, of which 1,207 were surgical cases. Of the new cases 3,686 were from outside Belur.

The financial position of the Dispensary, however, is far from satisfactory. The total receipts for 1937, including the previous year's balance, amounted to Rs. 1,252-1-8, and the total expenditure to Rs. 1,149-15-0, leaving a closing balance of Rs. 102 2-8 only. Contributions in the shape of medicines and other useful articles worth about Rs. 1,400 were received from philanthropic medical firms.

The pressing need of the Dispensary at present is a spacious building furnished with modern appliances and other essential outfits. The estimated cost of such a building is Rs. 11,000. A great part of this amount has already been contributed by some generous friends. We still require a sum of Rs. 3,000. We have started the construction, which could not be put off any longer, relying on the generosity of the public. We fervently hope that they will come forward with liberal contributions to enable us to complete the building within the next two months. All contributions will be thankfully received by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O., Belur Math, (Dt. Howrah).



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXV]

AUGUST, 1938

[No. 4

HINDU ETHICS

सर्वभूतात्मके तात जगन्नाथे जगन्मये । परमात्मनि गोविन्दे मित्रमित्रकथा कुतः ॥
त्वय्यस्ति मगवान् विष्णुः मयि चान्यत्र चास्ति सः । यतस्ततोऽयं मित्रं मे शत्रुश्चेति पृथक् कुतः ॥
न मन्त्रादिकृतं तात न च नैसर्गिको मम । प्रभाव एष सामान्यो यस्य यस्याच्युतो हृदि ॥
अन्येषां यो न पापानि चिन्तयत्यात्मनो यया । तस्य पापागमस्तात हेत्वभावान् न विद्यते ॥
कर्मणा मनसा वाचा परपीडो करोति यः । तद्वीजं जन्म फलति प्रभूतं तस्य चाशुभम् ॥
सोऽहं न पापमिच्छामि न करोमि वदामि वा । चिन्तयन् सर्वभूतस्य सामान्यपि च केशवम् ॥
शरीरं मानसं दुःखं दैवं भूतभवं तथा । सर्वत्र शुभचित्तस्य तस्य मे जायते कुतः ॥
एवं सर्वेषु भूतेषु भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी । ऋतव्या पण्डितैर्ज्ञात्वा सर्वभूतमयं हरिम् ॥

When the Supreme Self, who is the Lord and real substance of the Universe, ensouls all beings, O revered sire, where is the room for conceiving of enemies and allies ? In you and me and in everyone the blessed Lord exists. How then can we discriminate this one to be our friend, that one to be our opponent ? Just as one does not deliberate wrong for oneself, so also when one does not meditate evil for others, then that person cuts at the root the incidence of sin. But the person who harasses others by word, deed or act sows the same seed and reaps an abundant harvest of troubles. Deeming that the Lord is in all beings as well as in me, I do not either desire or utter or do anything sinful. How then can any misery accrue to me from any source ? This is the way for wise men to do, namely, to cherish and love all beings unswervingly, knowing that the Lord has expressed Himself as all beings.

Vishnu Purana.

FOUR IMPLICATIONS OF THE MAYA DOCTRINE

[In this and the ensuing issues for the year, we shall publish a series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna's views on the fundamental problems of spiritual life, based on his recorded sayings. In the course of these studies we shall also have occasion to take a passing view of many questions of absorbing interest in modern life and thought. 'Four Implications of the Maya Doctrine' is the fourth of this series.]

IN the last instalment we dealt with some of the important implications of the Maya doctrine. We shall consider herein what Sri Ramakrishna thought on this doctrine, from an examination of his recorded sayings. It is good to remember at the outset that the Master uses the term in four different shades of meaning, as implying (1) the ephemerality, and triviality of the world and its values, (2) the falsity (state of being *Mithya*) of the world, (3) Brahman in His aspect as Power, at which the mind arrives in its search for the cause of the 'world-spell', and (4) the expression of the Power in the world as the twin forces working for the bondage and liberation of the egoes experiencing the 'world-spell'. We shall place the Master's interpretation of Maya under these four main heads.

I

The first of these four significances of the concept of Maya, namely, that relating to the transiency and triviality of the world and its values, is what comes naturally to every sincere spiritual aspirant on examining the nature of the world. It is neither a philosophical nor a mystical point of view, but a common sense estimate of the world. It is perceivable by all, but it leaves a vivid impression only on a mind that has attained some

degree of dispassion. It is essentially a view which a mind with discrimination arrives at. That will be evident from the following teaching of the Master:

To a man who questioned the Master as to whether the world is unreal, the Master replied, "You yourself know how unreal this worldly life is. Think a little of the very house that we are in. How many men were born and how many died in it! Things of the world appear before us at one moment and vanish away the next. Those whom you know to be your 'own' will cease to exist for you, the moment you close your eyes in death. How strong is the hold of attachment upon a worldly man! There is none in the family who requires his attention; yet for the sake of a grandson he cannot go to Benares to practise devotion. 'What will become of my Hari,' is the one thought that keeps him bound to the world. In a *Ghuni* (a trap for catching fish) the way out is always open, yet the fish do not get out of it. The caterpillar shuts itself up in its own cocoon and perishes. Being of such a nature, is not this mundane life (*Samsara*) unreal and evanescent?"

Speaking in another vein, he says, "Just as you know about the condition of the rice in the cooking-pot by testing a few grains, so also you can know whether the world is real or unreal,

eternal or ephemeral, being or non-being, by examining two or three objects in it. Man is born, lives for some days, and then dies. So too are animals and trees. Discriminating like this, you come to know that the same is the fate of all things endowed with name and form, even of the earth, the sun and the moon. Do you not thus come to understand the nature of all things in the universe? When you thus recognise the world to be unreal (*i.e.* transcendent), you shall no longer have any love for it. You will renounce it from the mind, and become free from all desires. When you succeed in this act of renunciation, you come to know God who is the cause of the Universe."

It is to be noted that this is essentially the view of the discriminating mind, of the earnest spiritual aspirant who is seeking the knowledge of the Supreme. We shall next view the significance of Maya to a man of realisation.

II

The world as 'false' (Mithya), the second significance of the concept of Maya, is essentially a logical formulation of the doctrine. It implies that it belongs neither to the category of absolute existence like Brahman, nor of total non-existence like barren woman's son. It is on the side of 'existence' in so far as it is actually experienced; it is on the side of 'non-existence' in so far as spiritual awakening reveals it to be a mere appearance of a real basis as in the case of the mirage, experienced no doubt but clearly felt as not in the least affecting or limiting the substratum, *i.e.*, the Deity or Brahman. To indicate this peculiar nature of the world-

experience it is termed Mithya, and the doctrine of Maya in its logical aspect stands for this idea.

The Master, however, was not a logician or academic philosopher. When a logician once asked him, "Sir, what are subject, object and knowledge?" he replied, "My good man, I do not know all these niceties of scholastic learning. I know only the Self in me, and my Divine Mother." Again he said on another occasion, "I see the Being as the veritable reality with my very eyes. Why then should I reason?" Such being his attitude, he felt no need to enter into the logical subtleties of this doctrine. But even the logical formulation of the Maya theory rests on an experience of the mystical consciousness, namely, the awakening into the higher consciousness of the Spirit, in the light of which is felt the unsubstantiality of the world phenomenon in so far as it does not in the least affect the Deity even though He is its substratum. The Master's sayings indicate his acquiescence in regard to both the positive and negative aspects of this experience.

He thus describes a vision of his, very relevant to this topic: "Do you know what I saw now? A Divine Vision—the Vision of the Divine Mother! She appeared with a child in the womb, whom she brought forth and swallowed up next instant. And as much of it as went into Her mouth became void! She showed me that all is void." The point that the logicians labour to establish with the help of the subtle devices of their science is here driven home to our mind in terms of the highest poetry. The child is the 'world-child', subject to all the

joys and travails of birth, growth, decay and death. It is at first very tangible and impresses one with an intense sense of its reality; but illumination reveals that it is all 'void' within, i.e., an appearance that may continue to be perceived but which does not in any way affect the substratum.

The same principle is more or less emphasised in the following parable also: A Brahmin priest surreptitiously takes a cobbler, a man of untouchable caste, as his servant while visiting a disciple in his village home. To prevent him from being recognised as a man of low caste, the servant is asked to keep mum and not to make anybody's acquaintance. In the disciple's house another Brahmin asks the cobbler servant to fetch his shoes. True to his master's instruction, the servant remains irresponsible. The Brahmin is irritated at this and scolds him, saying, "How dare you disobey a Brahmin's command? Are you indeed a cobbler?" This fills the cobbler's mind with fear. Fearing that he has been found out, he flees away. So is Maya. When its nature is found out it flees away. The fleeing away may mean either the total disappearance of the phenomenal world, or the perception of it as false (Mithya).

This recognition, however, takes place only when the ego turns its gaze on the Deity, the Spirit untainted by the world. In fact the act of recognising the nature of Maya consists in recognising the reality of the Spirit, or to put it in other words, in transferring the sense of reality from the world of Maya to the Spirit. This is true spiritual awakening, and the Master as we have already said,

emphasises this aspect of the Maya doctrine than the logical; for he, as a seer of the first order, realised that the whole basis of the theory is in this recognition.

A few parables of his emphasising this positive aspect of the theory may be given. The cub of a lion brought up from birth among a flock of sheep grazes and bleats like the sheep. But when another lion shows him the reflection of them both in water, and makes him taste blood, the sheep-consciousness disappears at once, and he begins to roar like a lion.

Sage Narada once requested the Lord of the universe to show him His Maya. The Lord, therefore, took Narada on a walk, and after proceeding a long distance, asked him to fetch some water to drink. Narada went to a river, on the bank of which he saw a beautiful damsel. Captivated by her beauty, he married her, settled down as a householder, and had several children. Some years after, he and his family had to leave their hearth and home due to a devastating pestilence. In the course of their travel they were crossing a bridge, when came a sudden flood in the stream and carried away the whole family. Narada alone managed to escape. Stupified with sorrow, he sat on the river bank and began to cry bitterly. Just then he felt the stroke of a hand from behind, and heard a voice telling, "Narada, where is water?" When he turned his head, he saw the Lord. Narada was startled from a sleep as it were, and simultaneously he understood that all that had gone before was Maya, an experience that had not really affected him in any way.

In fact the Master's insistence is always on this illumination aspect, and according to him, the knowledge of the world as Maya, in the sense of Mithya or 'false', is essentially the experience of him who has had that illumination. Even one without illumination can have a vivid consciousness of the fleeting nature of worldly experiences and the triviality of the values they bring. We have already shown how the Master impresses this idea on the minds of aspirants, and how it is the very basis of Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya (dispassion), the chief virtues in spiritual life. But even the most vivid consciousness of the changeability and triviality of the world is not equal to the recognition of it as Mithya or 'false.' For the former implies revulsion and rejection, which are in themselves passionate and born of a vivid sense of the reality of the world, just as in the case of a man attached to it, whereas the latter gives a passionless detachment,—a state devoid of either infatuation or revulsion, but views the whole world including one's own life as a big joke, however serious it might be within its own system. This state is called Jnana, and according to the Master, it never comes without Samadhi, or illumination in perfect abstraction, in which the consciousness is absorbed in the Spirit, and no question even of the origin of the world-spell arises. The view of the world as Mithya is the state of experience that comes when the consciousness once illumined by the awakening of Samadhi re-enlivens the ego. Hence the Master says: "It is an easy thing to say that the world is an illusion, but do you know what that really means? It is

like the burning of camphor which leaves no residue. It is not like even burning of wood, which leaves ashes behind. Only when discrimination ends and the highest Samadhi is attained, there is absolutely no recognition of 'I', 'thou' and the universe." In fact the Master always emphasises that without Samadhi Jnana never comes, and that it is in Jnana alone that the world is realised as Mithya—as something experienced but without the capacity to affect the substratum, *i.e.*, as only an apparent phenomenon.

III

Next we pass on to the Master's views on Maya as Power or the First Cause. As we have said when we come to this phase of Maya doctrine, we raise the question: What is the cause of this world, with its implications of bondage and freedom, whether one takes it as real or apparent? Here the Master comes to his doctrine of Spirit as Power whom he calls the Divine Mother. He calls Her Maya, the Power that can make the impossible possible, and in the Master's teachings one comes across the use of the term in this sense more than in any other.

To the man in ignorance Maya is known only as its effect, namely, the world with the twin forces working in it for bondage and freedom. These are facts to him, and all his conceptions of values and dis-values are associated with them. He is not aware of Maya in the supreme casual aspect, which is none other than Spirit as Power or the Divine Mother. In the case of the Jnani the world experience disappears in the illumination of Samadhi when no

question of the cause of the world arises. When he is not in Samadhi, and consciousness enlivens the ego and the psycho-physical sheaths, the relative world is perceived; but he is neither interested or repulsed by it, knowing it to be Mithya, a figment attributable to Prarabdha or residual Karma. He realises his identity with the Spirit and the Spirit's untaintedness by Maya. But he has only an external view of Maya, and all that impresses him is that it is mere appearance. He does not understand the secret of Maya, namely, that the Supreme is simultaneously Spirit and Power. Therefore, in contrast to the Jnani, the Master speaks of the Vijnani, one who has intimate knowledge, or one who knows the Supreme as Spirit-Power. Like the Jnani he is centred in the Spirit and feels its untaintedness by the apparent world, but he also recognises the Spirit as the mysterious Power behind the world, manifesting itself as his ego and the external universe. As a consequence, just as his consciousness is centred in Spirit, his ego is identified with Spirit as Power. Hence his personality becomes a harmony of quiescence and dynamism. The Master illustrates his status by the example of the elephant's teeth. The elephant has two sets of teeth, the external tusks and the inner grinders; the first is visible, the other not. Thus as far as the Vijnani is concerned there is transcendental peace of the Spirit within, but since his ego is attuned with the Cosmic Ego or Spirit as Power, there is in the life of his ego the manifestation of all spiritual sentiments and an urge for the regeneration of society.

So for such a Vijnani, a spiritual man of the first order, Maya essentially means Spirit as Power, whose reality is a tangible experience for Him. Of Maya in this sense the Master says: "Maya is to Brahman what snake in motion is to the snake at rest. Power in action is Maya, Power in potency is Brahman. The ocean in the tranquil state is Brahman, and in the turbulent state Maya. When the Supreme Being is thought of as actionless—neither creating, sustaining nor destroying—I call Him by the name of Brahman or Purusha. But when I think of Him as active—creating, sustaining and destroying—I call Him by the name of Sakti, Maya, Prakriti or the Divine Mother." But Maya, being the Spirit itself, never taints it. Says the Master: "The snake itself is not affected by the poison that is in its fangs; but when it bites another, the poison kills the creature bitten. Likewise there is Maya in the Lord, but it does not affect Him, while the same Maya causes the delusion of the whole universe."

IV

This idea of Maya causing the delusion of the whole universe brings us to the fourth sense in which the Master uses the term. If Maya is the cause of the world experience, it is appropriate to call its effect also by the same term. So while the whole world may thus be called Maya in this sense, the Master applies the term specially to the two tendencies in it working for the liberation and bondage of man. The liberating tendency is called Vidya Maya or Knowledge, and the binding tendency, Avidya Maya or Ignorance. Says the

Master: "In God there are both Vidya Maya and Avidya Maya. The Vidya Maya takes man towards God, whereas the Avidya Maya diverts him from the path of the Lord. Knowledge, devotion, dispassion, compassion—all these are expressions of Vidya Maya. With their help only one can reach God." Referring to Vidya Maya the Master says again, "It is due to Maya alone that such things as attainment of supreme Knowledge and of final beatitude become possible for us. Otherwise

who could even dream of all these things?" And what is Avidya? It consists of egotism in all its ramifications, working for complicating man's worldly entanglements. Pride, the sense of agency, slavery to sex, greed and other passions, and all other ways of our mental and physical life that weaken our hankering for God, are included in it. As Maya in these two aspects forms an important part of the Master's teachings, we shall treat them in greater detail separately.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Devotee

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the Bengali original.]

It was early in the morning. I was seated near the Mother's bed, and she began to talk to me about the Master.

Disciple: Does the Master really live in the picture?

Mother: Of course he does. The body and the shadow are the same¹. And what is his picture but a shadow?

Disciple: Does he live in all the pictures?

Mother: Yes, if you pray to him constantly before his picture, then he manifests himself through that picture. The place where the picture is kept becomes a shrine. Suppose a man worships the Master there (pointing to a plot of land north of the Udbodhan), then the place is associated with his presence.

Disciple: Well, good and bad memories are associated with all places.

Mother: It is not exactly like that. The Master will pay special attention to such a place.

Disciple: Does the Master really partake of the food that you offer him?

¹ It is due to this sameness of the two that one does not walk over the shadow of an elder. One day while living at Jayrambati I was returning home after my bath. The mother was also coming back from the lake. I was walking by her side, and now and then I stepped over her shadow. The Mother asked me to walk on her other side. At first I did not know that I had been walking over her shadow.

Mother: Yes, he does.

Disciple: But we do not see any sign of it.

Mother: A light comes out of his eyes and licks all the articles of food-stuff. But He is Immortality itself ; therefore, no matter how much he eats, the quantity of food before him does not lessen. It is replenished as fast as he eats it.

Mother: Why, does the Master need to eat food? He doesn't. He eats the food offering only for the gratification of the devotees. The sacred Prasad purifies the heart. The mind becomes impure if one eats food without first offering it to God.²

Disciple: Does the Master really partake of the food offering?

Mother: Yes. Do I not notice whether he partakes of the food or not? The Master takes his seat before the plate and then partakes of the food.

Disciple: Do you actually see it?

Mother: Yes. In the case of some offerings, he actually eats it, and in other cases he merely looks at it. Take your own case. You don't like to eat all things at all times. Nor do you relish the food offered by anyone and everyone. It is like that. One's love of God depends entirely upon one's

inner feeling. Love of God is the essential thing.

Disciple: How does one get love of God? If one's own son be brought up by someone else, he does not recognize his own mother as his mother.

Mother: Yes, that is true. The grace of God is the thing that is needful. One should desire the grace of God.

Disciple: How can one speak of deserving grace, or not deserving it? Grace is the same for all.

Mother: One must pray sitting on the bank of the river. He will be taken across in the fitness of time.

Disciple: Everything happens in the fitness of time. Then where does God's grace come in?

Mother: Must you not sit with the fishing rod in your hand, if you want to catch the fish?

Disciple: If God be our 'own', why then should one sit and wait?

Mother: That is true. It may happen even out of season. Don't you see nowadays how people get fruits like mango and jack-fruit out of season. How many mangoes grow nowadays in the month of Bhadra.

Disciple: Is this our limit that He sends us away by giving us what we desire? Or, can one get Him as one's very own? Is God my very own?

Mother: Yes, God is one's very 'own'. It is the eternal relationship. He is everyone's 'own'. A man realizes Him as he thinks of Him.

Disciple: Thinking is nothing but a dream. A man dreams what he thinks.

Mother: Yes, it is dream. The whole world is a dream, even this is also a dream.

Disciple: No, this is not a dream, or it would have disappeared in the

² A devotee had once accepted from the Holy Mother the ochre robe of the monastic life. He suffered from illness for some years and had been to several different places for change of air. Later he spent some time at his home instead of living at the monastery. One day he came to Jayarambati and returned the ochre robe to the Holy Mother. Referring to the incident the Holy Mother said, "Alas, his mind has become impure on account of his eating the food of worldly-minded people."

twinkling of an eye. This state exists for many, many births.

Mother: Let it be so; still, it is nothing but dreams. What you dreamt last night does not exist now. (As a matter of fact, on the previous night the disciple had had an amazing dream) The farmer dreamed at night that he was a king and the father of eight sons. When the dream vanished he said to his wife, "Shall I weep for my eight children or for this one?"

After arguing thus with the Mother I said, "Mother, I don't really bother my head about what I just said to you. All that I want to know is whether there is anyone whom I may call my 'own'."

Mother: Yes, such a one exists.

Disciple: Surely?

Mother: Yes.

Disciple: If he be really our 'own', then why should we pray unto Him in order to see Him? One who is truly my 'own' would come to me even if I did not call to Him. Does God do things for us as our parents do?

Mother: Yes, that is true, my child. He himself has become our father and mother. He Himself brings us up as our parents do. It is He

alone who looks after us. Otherwise, where have you been and where are you now? Your parents brought you up, but at last realized that you did not belong to them. Have you not seen a cuckoo brought up in the nest of a crow?

Disciple: Shall I realize God as really my 'own'?

Mother: Yes, surely you will realize Him? Whatever you think, you will get. Did not Swamiji (referring to Swami Vivekananda) realize Him? You will realize Him as Swamiji did.

Disciple: Mother, please see that I do not have any fear or hesitation (towards the Holy Mother).

Mother: No, what hesitation can there be? I myself have hooked the big fish.

Disciple: That is good. We all shall enjoy it.

Mother: Yes, that is right. One makes the mould, and many others make their images from it.

Disciple: Yes, we shall get everything if you only work for us. You cannot set us aside.

Mother: Yes, my child, you will have all if I do it for you.

REASON AND CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

By P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A.

[Mr. Nagaraja Rao, formerly research scholar in the Madras University, has arrayed the salient arguments that have been put forward by various schools of contemporary thought in the West to dethrone Reason from its privileged position. In his opinion Reason cannot claim renewed allegiance unless we have a correct and wide perspective of human personality as rooted in Divinity. Reason is envisaged herein as that capacity to behave consciously in response to the innermost essence of our being.]

IT is a commonplace statement to say that human life in the twentieth century is intensely active and fundamentally stirring. Rapid changes

are taking place before our very eyes. Systems of scientific and philosophic thought are fast being fashioned out, and different political programmes

are proclaimed by the several dictators of the European States with a view to establish political millenniums. Thoughtful men of our age are all one in accusing modern civilization. They are all of opinion that our age has a substantial body, but a soul which has died on account of fatty degeneration and heady emotions. No steady wind of purpose fills the sails of our ship. Economists of the different schools of thought, though impatient of revolutionary activities, still profess dissatisfaction with the existing order of society. No sane individual maintains that the existing order of society is the inevitable necessary order of society. All are agreed that the body social is suffering from some dreadful malaise. Solutions ranging from incantation to socialism are fastly being advocated.

THE RATIONALIST'S CASE

The complete structure of modern civilization, says the Rationalist, is the magnificent achievement of human reason. "Reason is that attitude of the mind which refuses to accept beliefs, conventions and institutions merely because we find them in possession of the field. It is the eager inquiring critical and inventive spirit of man." "What Science cannot discover or teach, mankind cannot know."¹

It is science and technological development that has made this planet habitable. It has achieved a unity which makes the world interdependent. It has made leisure possible and has reduced human drudgery. Industrial revolution and mechanical inventions have considerably improv-

ed and raised the output of consumer's goods. Everybody is immensely pleased with the advantages and amenities which science has supplied.

The Rationalist is not content like the average men to merely admire *scientific technique* and to give up the *scientific temper of mind*. Further their plea is to extend the rational principle to society and to reconstruct society on the basis of Reason. Philosophy for them is not a man-flattering view of the universe. It is a science which fosters clear thinking and disinterested intellectual thought.² It creates sympathy for other points of view. Knowledge for the Rationalist is not merely useful in the practical world ; it has indirect effect on the life of the individual. Thoroughgoing Rationalism makes us less dogmatic about our points of view. We know that science at best can give us 'sufficiently probable results and not absolutely certain truths'. The truth of science, we come to know, is at best statistical. The hypotheses are mere approximations to truth. We acquire the necessary sceptical outlook which suspends judgment where evidence is lacking. The speculative daring of man's intellect is sharpened by the inconclusiveness of thought itself. "Possession is static. Acquisition is ecstatic." "To ask for finality is to lack vitality." It is Rationalism that corrects the threefold defects of knowledge, namely, (a) cocksureness, (b) self-contradictoriness and (c) vagueness.³

The Rationalist solution is the sane education of mankind with a view to

¹ J. A. Hobson: *Rationalism and Humanism*.

² Russell: *Outline of Philosophy*, Chap. I and p. 30-32.

³ Bertrand Russell: *Religion and Science*, p. 243.

create the scientific temper of mind. Such a temper of mind can only be acquired by the dismissal of all our pet prejudices and predilections. We should not create any dope or illusion to cover our life. We should not expect the world of facts to correspond to our hope and wishes. We should not believe that the universe is friendly or hostile to us. Such a view might represent life to be stark and bleak. But it has its own safety. The dangers of such an attitude are the dangers of life and not of death. "In spite of the relentless hurrying of Nature, man is yet free, during his brief years to examine, to criticise, to know and, in imagination, to create. To him alone in this world with which he is acquainted, the freedom belongs, and in this lies his superiority to the rest of the outside world."⁴ "New truths are always uncomfortable to the holders of power", nevertheless the history of human thought is marked by such steps only. It is in the hope of such important achievements that the human species live.

The Rationalist does not believe in the absolute nature of values. To him enlightened humanitarianism is the only ethical creed. The two fundamental instincts that are present in men are (1) the acquisitive instinct and (2) the creative instinct. The acquisitive instinct expresses itself vehemently in the institutions of property, family and marriage. This instinct leads man to go to war and professes intense nationalism. The 'international anarchy' prevalent to-day is due to this instinct in man. This instinct is reflected in the speculative field also. Philosophical idealists from

Plato onwards have made the individual the centre of reference and have created the world after their desire. We have the man-flattering view of the universe. We are told that the whole panorama of nature is a pale projection of the potent mind of man. "Nature gets credit which should in truth be reserved for ourselves: the rose for its scent: the nightingale for his song: and the sun for his radiance. The poets are entirely mistaken. They should address their lyrics to themselves, and should turn them into odes of self-congratulations on the excellency of the human mind."⁵ The play of the acquisitive instinct expresses itself in immoderate love of the Self. The evils of modern capitalism are partly the results of the acquisitive instinct. Hence the Rationalist pleads for a type of education which is calculated to completely eradicate the acquisitive instinct in man and plant in its place the creative instinct *i.e.* the co-operative, not the competitive. Civilization is a co-operative adventure and not a competitive arena planned for mutual destruction. A true civilization is yet to come. The world's real soul is yet unborn. Mankind has not yet the sense to treat humanity as a community and world-history as a mutual-aid-society.

The Rationalist does not despair about the behaviour of man. He believes in the educability and the fundamental good nature of man and the capacity of reason to educate him. In view of these two tenets the Rationalist pleads for the creation of the proper type of educational agency by the State, which would create the

⁴ Russell's *Freeman's worship*.

⁵ A. N. Whitehead: *Science and the Modern World*, p. 61-69.

scientific and human temper of mind necessary for human welfare. The ego-centric view should give way to the community-idea. 'A life guided by knowledge and inspired by love' is the maxim of the Rationalist. Individuals producing goods and not feverishly possessing them; acting valiantly but not asserting their vulgar selves; developing their true selves to high knowledge but not dominating others—is the creed of the Rationalists.⁶

THE ABSOLUTE IDEALIST'S ATTACK ON REASON

The absolute Idealists' attack the Reason of the unrepentent Rationalist vehemently. The prophets of the cult of unreason are legion. They hold that Reason is not the ultimate value of life. Reason they hold, is one of the faculties of man. Character and human personality are not all rationality. The absolute Idealists hold that Reason cannot be an effective guide to the knowledge of Reality. Reason expresses itself in and through certain categories of human thought. The knowledge of Reality is the goal of the human endeavour. Reality is indivisible experience. Reason is a finite limited instrument. It can only give us a mediate relational type of knowledge and cannot help us to comprehend the all-comprehensive Reality. "There is nothing outside Reality or the spirit." This fact rules out the possibility of a rational type of knowledge. So the Absolutists in the East as well as in the West believe in a faculty which transcends, and is different from, Reason called

intuition or Aparoksha. To use Prof. Bradley's phrase, there is no *knowing* Reality but only *being* Reality. Reason declares itself bankrupt at the stage of intuition. Intuition is not reason minus something but it is reason plus something. "We intuit the Absolute and explain it by logic."⁷ The great dialecticians of post-Sankara thought have elaborately pointed out that the categories of human knowledge such as, Substance, Attributes, Time, Space, Change, Cause, Relation and Selves, are self-contradictory. Prof. Bradley has attempted such a thorough examination in his 'Appearance and Reality'. To use the words of Kant, all that the categories of thought give us is the knowledge *about* things and *not of* a thing. Reason works within limits. So "where intellect ends, intuition begins."⁸ The intuition referred to by the Absolutists is beyond the pale and pen of knowledge. So the Absolutist distrusts Reason as the ultimate guide.⁹

THE PSYCHOLOGIST'S ATTACK ON REASON

The developments in modern science considerably support the attack on

⁷ Prof. Sir. S. Radhakrishnan: *Idealist View of Life*; Chap. V.

⁸ Sri Harsa: *Khandana-Khanda-Khadya*.

⁹ Bertrand Russell's criticism of Hegel's Philosophy is as follows:—

"In Hegel's Philosophy nothing is held to be quite true, nothing quite false; what can be uttered was only a limited truth, and since men must talk, we cannot blame them for not speaking the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The best we can do is to say things that are 'not intellectually corrigible' a further progress from this position is only possible through a synthesis of thought and feeling, which when achieved will lead to our saying nothing." (Rationalist Annual 1937, page 6: 'My Religious Reminiscences'.)

⁶ "Production without Possession, action without self-assertion, and development without domination." Lao Tze.

Reason. The determinist view of the universe is fast going out of fashion. Indeterminacy has come to stay at the heart of the atom. The unpredictability of the movement of the atom is the astonishing discovery of intra-atomic physics. Chance and probability are the dogmas of science to-day. Thus there is no faith in a co-ordinating feature called Reason which can calculate forces accurately.

The Behaviouristic school of psychology headed by Dr. Watson and others pleads for a thorough deterministic view of man. They say that there is no difference between mind and matter. They do not believe in consciousness. They treat consciousness as an epiphenomenon. The laws of physics which govern matter govern mind also. Man is represented as 'an assembled organic machine ready to run'. "Language is a series of muscled twitchings." Thought is a motor organization consisting of sub-vocal movements of speech, muscles, and emotions. These are visceral reactions. Man, the determined machine, can act in no way different from what his instincts dictate. Another great psychologist of our time, Dr. McDougall (the official exponent of the Hormie School of psychology) defines man as a bundle of some thirteen instincts. He further adds that the instincts are the prime movers of humanity. Man acts in accordance with his instincts. Reason is one such instinct of the thirteen. So it cannot be the final arbiter.

For a thorough normal life, the play and the development of all the instincts are necessary, and Reason cannot take the chief place among the instincts. The chief characteristic

nature of personality is not exhausted by rationality.

The psycho-analytic school of Freud points out that man is completely governed by his Unconscious. The conscious behaviour of man is only a very insignificant part of the whole of man's consciousness. The unconscious desires sublimated is Reason. Reason is merely a process of finding a way out for our unconscious desires. Psycho-analysis represents man, not as drawn from the front, but as pushed from behind. So the psychoanalyst does not believe in the capacity of Reason to act as an independent dictator of man's conduct. According to him, man is a determined and irrational machine. Reason is merely a tool or a handmaid of man's desire. Its work is to secure and rationalise what the Unconscious feels. It invents excuses for what we instinctively feel. Reason is only a machine propelled by the steampower of instinct. All philosophy and human thought is the 'finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct, but to find these reasons is no less an instinct.'¹⁰

LITERATURES' ATTACK ON REASON

The great Novelists of our time, Aldous Huxley and D. H. Lawrence, are all up against Reason. The anti-rationalism of Huxley is not so intellectual as it appears at the first look. Huxley, no doubt, is scientific in his outlook. But he has taken care not to make science the final truth of life. He pleads for an all-round development of all the sides of our nature. He treats Reason as one aspect of human life. He denies only the

¹⁰ Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, p. 4.

primacy of Reason over other aspects of human life. Reason cannot be our sole guide to conduct or truth. The gift of reason is a late acquisition in the process of evolution. Huxley's intellectual anti-rationalism is developing unmistakably on mystical lines. The evidence for this fact is clearly perceived in his novel, 'The Eyeless in Gaza'. Huxley is of opinion that science cannot directly reveal truth nor can it *immediately* apprehend it. "Science is no truer than common sense, or lunacy than art or religion." His latest volume, 'The End and Means', is his testament to humanity. The ideal he envisages there is the non-attached man — non-attached to his bodily sensations and lusts, to his craving for power and possessions. This can be achieved not through critical intellect, but constructive practice of the disinterested virtues. Further, he complains that the absence of ideals is the cause of the barbaric state of society. By the practice of disinterested virtues we must create a just society fit for non-attached men and women to be members of, and such, at the same time, as only non-attached men and women could organise.¹¹

D. H. Lawrence's revolt against Rationalism can be labelled as romantic anti-Rationalism. Lawrence was of opinion that Reason was impotent in the sphere of thought and was a great obstruction to full and free life. Suppression of instinctive life is the death of personality. Soul-spending was his creed, not soul-saving. "The best way of overcoming temptation is yielding to it." Intellectualism is considered by Lawrence as a disease like high

temperature. To use the words of Professor Macmurray, intellectualism is the neurosis of the mind which results from the desire to escape from the necessity of action by spinning out thought to infinity. Thought does violence to our true nature. Reason is the cancer eating into our very vitals. Lawrence exhorts us to take to full, free and fruitful living and not to restrain our passions. "The great blood-stream which surges in the solar plexus of the body is the real truth of life. Sex-mysticism is the highest delight in human life." Lawrence likes to submerge Reason and give full sway to instinct. To allow Reason to rule the soul is an offence. "To live, the soul must be in intimate contact with the world, must assimilate through all the channels of sense and desire, thought and feelings, what Nature has provided for the purpose." Good living is full living. The best life is that which satisfies the greatest number of our impulses and desires.

Such a revolt against Reason leads the prophet on to easy mysticism. Mysticism is a sort of portmanteau expression which can cover different types of experiences, ranging from sex-thrill to poetic delight. These anti-rationalists plead for an anarchic state of society and for abolishing all possible restraint imposed by society. They are up against any form of institution. They are individualists *par excellence*. These handful of individualists take an extreme delight in the affairs of this world and live their own lives.

THE SCEPTIC'S ATTACK ON REASON

The Great Dramatist of our age, George Bernard Shaw, is very sceptical about the superiority of the scientific view of the universe. In his play,

¹¹Huxley: *Ends and Means*, Chap. I.

'The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isle' he observes that there is a law of the conservation of credulity. We have lost our simple faith in the flat-universe and are prepared to believe in the expanding and the dying universe. Religion has become the mother of scepticism, and science the home of credulity. "The shift of credulity from religious divination to scientific invention is very often a lapse from a comparatively harmless romance to mischievous, murderous quackery." The sceptic is not enamoured of the intellectual capacities of man. He knows definitely that man, after all, is a curious accident in the backwaters of life, "a mixture of virtues and vices, a few pounds of carbon, a few quarts of water, some lime, a little phosphorus and sulphur, a pinch of iron and silicon, a handful of mixed salts, all scattered and recombined." Nothing seems to matter to him. This 'intelligent waggered species' has constantly changed his objectives. In the early stages of civilisation, humanity sought home, family, property; in the twentieth century it attacks property. Sometimes we seek to be intensely national. The universe to him is organised in some parts and cinders in the rest. "A being with other values might think ours so atrocious as to be proof that we are inspired by Satan." Humanity is not so splendid to justify the long prologue and epilogue of idealistic thought. There is no need for the 'glorification of man'. "How about lions and tigers? They destroy fewer animals or human lives than we do."¹² How about ants? They manage a Corporate State much

better than the 'Bandit leader of Abyssinia' or the mystic leader of Germany. "Would not a world of nightingales and larks and deer be better than our human world of cruelty, injustice and war?"¹³ The sceptic concludes that man has not been still taught humility. "Copernicus abolished the primacy of man's planet in the universe. Darwin abolished the primacy of man within his planet, and materialistic psychology abolished the primacy of the mind within the man, and Freud told us that our desires are the offshoots of the Unconscious.

Further, the sceptic attacks the Rationalists on the ground that Reason is only one of the instincts of man. The Rationalist cannot answer the question why we should be rational? Nor can the rationalists point out that the faculty of reason is free from all shackles. He cannot breed evidence for the inherent validity of Reason. Belief in Reason is also a type of faith non-different from faith in other things. The intellectual sceptic realises 'that in this incomprehensible world full of the savage and the stupid and the suffering with monstrous contrasts and the most queer happenings we ought not to fly to another world for compensation'. We ought to be of the earth and not of heaven. The sceptic blinks at nothing and dares everything, and even in tragedy, never loses the sane 'unconscious rapture' and prepossession with that 'entrancing occupation' which we call life. Firm in reality, they embody the faith that 'sufficient unto this earth is the beauty and the meaning thereof'. "There is, as it were, the

¹² Bertrand Russell: *Religion and Science*, Ch.VIII, pp. 221-222.

¹³ *Ibid*, 221-222.

proud exuberance of Nature, and no eye turned on the hereafter, and so they fill us with the gladness to be alive, through the rain it raineth everyday."

THE REVELATIONIST'S ATTACK ON REASON

The great religionists of the world are of opinion that Reason can be refuted by better Reason, and revelation cannot. They believe that the inspiration of the artist, the vision of the mystic, the urge of the social reformer, the institutions of the plain man, and the emotion of the lover, all are the results of revelations. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and the Avesta are examples of infallible revealed truths. Reason, the Revelationist says, is only a servant. We cannot trust Reason as the guide for the discovery of all the principles. Professor Graham Wallas in his well-known book on 'The Art of Thought' points out that there are four distinct stages in the process of inventive thought. The first is that of preparation during which period the data are collected and investigated from different fields of observation. The second stage is that of incubation. In this stage no conscious and deliberate thinking is being done. No connections between the several factors of the data are collected. We sleep over the idea. The third stage is called the 'happy-idea' stage. It is at this level that the truths are illumined to us. This is the stage of intuition. The truth is revealed, 'the mind sees, the heart feels and the soul approves'. The fourth stage is the usual stage of verification. "We discover by intuition but prove by logic."

The Revelationist's attitude has come to stay as a striking feature of

modern political thought and political institutions. Individual liberty and individual initiative are ruthlessly suppressed.¹⁴

All the Fascist States to-day are systematically suppressing individual liberty. State-worship and community-adoration have come to stay with us as settled political objectives. Economic nationalism has become the law of the states. The advent of Signor Mussolini and Herr Hitler and Stalin to power is the sign of the most far-reaching attack on individual liberty. "Democracy, the only device so far known to mankind for controlling the holders of power, breaks down when the electorate is unable to resist rhetoric and false objectives such as racial prejudices and false national sentiments." A few individuals with the help of the army and the propertied class have come to power and established themselves as the Great Fascist leaders of the European countries. They have all taken advantage of the insecurity and fear of men. Freedom or liberty can exist only in an atmosphere where there is toleration. These dictators of modern Europe style themselves as political prophets having audience with Providence Himself. For example Hitler retires into his home and shuts himself up completely for three days. After the period he comes out and says that Germany ought to be withdrawn from the League. So the rest do. Authoritarianism in politics means 'rule by Revelation'. Trade Unions are abolished; concentration camps are erected; political disaffection is punished by murder. The

¹⁴ C. E. M. Joad: *Liberty to-day*

standard of life in the State is lowered in order to produce armaments for war. Attention is withdrawn by these dictators from the home matters to foreign policy. These supermen of our age have thought democracy a gamble too great to be played with. The promised advantages of the Corporate State of the dictator have remained on paper. The ordinary 'swinish multitude' who are merely born to live and to die without a true glimpse and insight into any of the forces by which the world is moved, are moved to great excitement and action by the lavish promises of the dictators.¹⁵

Authoritarianism in politics can only be put an end to by a true education,—a kind of popular education which has hitherto been wholly lacking, 'an education in critical judgment and scepticism and even in something like cynicism is the supreme need of the hour'. The great danger in the politics of our time is that those desirous of power are not as a rule those most likely to exercise it for public good. When a man seeks wealth, he is apt to be laughed at if he says that he only wants in order to use it philanthropically; but when a man seeks power, his lofty professions are accepted by a vast number at their face value.¹⁶

Standardisation of culture, systematic suppression of any opinion contrary to the state, militant nationalism, supreme faith in armaments, retreat of Reason, superstitious faith in race-superiority and governance

by guile, are a few disastrous effects of the authoritarianism in politics. The State is not merely there to produce powerful organisations through the citizens; but the production of splendid individuals must be its aim. Totalitarian States are a great hindrance to the development of the individual. Without the development of the individual, the human personality cannot grow or express itself in any work of art.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary revolt against Reason by different systems of thought has entirely misconstrued the true nature of human personality and rationality. The rationalists' definition of Reason is one-sided. He takes Reason to be a special faculty superintending other faculties of man. Reason, the differentiating characteristic of man from the animal, should not be assessed as a separate and abstract faculty. This separatist fallacy has crept into rationalists' thought because of their misconception of human personality and rationality. "Reason is the integrated harmonisation of all the impulses of man." Reason subordinates the several impulses of man to broad and coherent ends.¹⁷ It is the principle of coherent inclusiveness. The weakness of the Rationalist is his narrow outlook. He defines man too narrowly and delimits Reason.

The fully rational individual is a true personality. Reason and perfect personality go together. Perfect individuality is the sign of rationality. The Hindu view of life has a

¹⁵ Professor Laski's Introduction to the Pelican Edition of *Liberty in the Modern State*.

¹⁶ Cf. Russell in *Political Quarterly*, July 1937: *Power, ancient and modern*.

¹⁷ Similar view of Reason is maintained by Prof. W. C. De Burgh, *Hibbert Journal*, October 1937.

more comprehensive and non-defective view of Reason. The Hindu philosophic definition of values places Moksha as the highest value. That is the development of our true personality. Rationality is not perfect till it achieves this end. The pursuit of Reason or philosophy is not for the abstract attainment of Truth. Truth is the goal of science. According to the Indian Philosophy, Truth is the means to a fuller life. Human personality is not mere body. Hence the physicist's and Physiologist's interpretation of man is not final and is far from satisfactory.

Man is not mere mind ; nor life, physical and intellectual, the only arena of man. Hence the Humanist's interpretation of thought is far from satisfactory. Man is essentially spiritual. It is the spiritual restlessness that is responsible for the experimenting instinct of man. As long as there is no development of the spiritual aspect of man, no form of political government or economic millennium can usher in an era of bliss and peace. Plato long ago observed that the constitutions are not born out of rocks, but only out of the dispositions of men. The Upanishads in the East say there is no greater verity than personality.¹⁸ The spiritual Revolution is the establishment of a deeper unity. Science has helped us to treat the world as a well-circumscribed home.

"Commerce has become international, and currencies are linked." To-day we have more knowledge and power than our ancestors. What we lack is essentially the spirit to treat men as spiritual entities and not as means. Spiritual Revolution alone can turn this vague and dim feeling of a community into a conscious urge translating itself into action. The narrowness of the definition of Reason is due to the non-inclusion of the two different aspects of man's life, i.e., the artistic and the religious. Reason is not mere thinking capacity, nor is thinking the only characteristic quality of human personality. Reason viewed purely as an intellectual activity is not self-contained. It is merely a sound-board of one aspect of our personality. Reason is that capacity to behave consciously in terms of the nature of the whole personality and not a part thereof. The securing of the intrinsic value of human personality and the treatment of men as ends, not as means after the Kantian model, is the aim of true Reason (Vidya). The use of Vidya (Reason) can most certainly bring about the world-fellowship; lack of it is death. True democracy, in the words of Prof. Barker, is not cutting heads nor counting them, but laying them together.

¹⁸ (पुरुषान् न परं किञ्चित् सा काष्ठा सा परामर्तिः) *Katha Upanishad*, Chap. 3. p. 11.

IN QUEST OF ATMAN

By A. Seeker After Truth

[The following is an elucidation of the famous section of the Chhandogya Upanishad, dealing with the quest of Indra and Virochana for Brahman.]

I

THE great Prajapathi had said of old, "That Atman who is free from evil, old age, death, sorrow, hunger and thirst, whose desires and volitions are of the nature of truth—He is to be sought after and understood. To him who has known that Atman, accrues the result of obtaining all worlds and all desires." Both the Devas and Asuras had heard of this declaration, and so they said among themselves, "We shall search for that Atman by knowing whom we shall attain all the worlds and all the desires." The kings of both these hostile groups—Indra from among the Devas, and Virochana from among the Asuras—themselves started on this holy mission, without, however, the knowledge of each other. Leaving aside all the paraphernalia of their kingly office, they humbly approached Prajapathi with fuel in hand, as students used to do in days of yore. After they had lived the hard life of Brahmacharya (life of religious students) in Prajapathi's abode for thirty-two years, they were one day asked by Prajapathi, "Desiring what have you both lived here?" On account of the seriousness of their common quest, the Asura and the Deva though enemies by nature, had abandoned mutual jealousies and the consequent impurities like hatred, attachment and delusion, and unanimously replied to the Prajapathi's question

"We have heard a declaration of Thine, O Lord, which says, 'That Atman who is free from evil, old age, death, sorrow, hunger and thirst, whose desires and volitions are of the nature of Truth—He is to be sought after and understood. To him who has known that Atman, accrues the result of obtaining all worlds and all desires.' Desiring to know Him have we stayed here."

To them Prajapathi said, "He who is seen in the eye is the Atman I have spoken of, and He is the immortal, fearless Brahman," meaning thereby the effulgent Person whom Yogis, free from impurity, see on closing their eyes in meditation. Indra and Virochana did not, however, understand the real meaning of Prajapathi owing to the impurity of their mind. They mistook the Atman to be the body, whose reflection is seen on looking to the eye of a person. None the less they thought in their conceit that they had understood the correct import of Prajapathi's words, and as if to re-assure themselves they asked, "Is He the same as the one (reflection) perceived on looking into water or mirror?" Being a wise teacher, Prajapathi did not like to humiliate his disciples and shatter their self-confidence all at once by showing the absurdity of their conclusion. With a view to enlighten them step by step, he said, for the time being, in reply to their query, "He is the same as the

one perceived in water or a mirror." Immediately, however, in order to make them understand their mistake by themselves, Prajapathi asked them to look at their own figures in a basin of water and afterwards to question him on what they did not understand about the Self (Atman). Accordingly the Deva and the Asura looked at themselves in a basin of water, and the Prajapathi then asked them, "What do you see?" They replied, "O Lord, we see ourselves exactly as we are, a very picture of ourselves, even to the nail and the hair." Seeing that even now no doubt had arisen in their mind regarding the correctness of the first idea they had formed about the Atman, Prajapathi said to them again, "Shave yourselves and pair your nails, and then putting on your best clothes, look at yourselves in a basin of water." They did accordingly and Prajapathi asked them, "What do you see?" They replied, "Just as we are well-adorned and well-dressed even so these (i.e., the images) are also well-adorned and well-dressed." By showing the contrast between their images under these two different conditions, Prajapathi wanted to make clear to them their mistake in identifying the Atman with the shadow or the body; for it was palpable that deathlessness and immortality could not be attributed to an object like the shadow or the body, in which changes can be noticed even when it undergoes such simple processes like shaving and dressing. But Indra and Virochana, being unfit to understand the Atman, still remained convinced of their former view; and Prajapathi therefore said to them, seeing their incompetency, "He is the deathless and fearless Brahman." (Their

attachment to the body made it impossible for them to conceive anything higher than the body idea. Hence they returned home perfectly satisfied with what they had learnt. Seeing them depart with this wrong conception, Prajapathi said, looking after them, "They are going away without having known the Atman in reality. Whoever adheres to the false doctrine of body-worship, whether he be the Asura or the Deva, he will certainly be destroyed."

II

The Asura Virochana, owing to his conceit, not only failed to understand the real import of Prajapathi's teaching but in addition gave an interpretation to it in agreement with his own nature. When we place before a mirror two clothes, one blue and another not blue, and looking at the reflection, say that the blue one is more valuable, we evidently mean the cloth having blue colour and not its shadow. Reassuring himself in such a manner, Virochana interpreted the shadow-self to mean the body which formed the basis of the shadow and felt very glad at heart to receive the support of Prajapathi himself for his instinctive love for the body and for his eagerness to provide it with objects of enjoyment. So on reaching his kingdom, he preached to his subjects, "The body alone is to be worshipped, the body alone is to be attended upon; by worshipping and attending upon the body one attains both the worlds, this as well as the next."

But Indra, though he too had failed to understand the real meaning of Prajapathi's instruction, did not, however, hastily impose any

meaning on the words of his teacher in order to suit his tastes and inherent inclinations. Endowed as he was with divine nature, he felt on reflection the incongruity of regarding such a frail thing like the shadow-self as the eternal and deathless Atman. Even on his way it struck his mind that with every change in the body the shadow-self also would undergo change. When the body is well-adorned, it is also well-adorned, when cleanly shaven, it is also clean shaven. In like manner it would also be blind when the body becomes blind, one-eyed when the body is one-eyed, crippled when the body is crippled, and eventually it is bound to disappear also when the body is destroyed. Hence he felt even before reaching his kingdom that the shadow-idea of the Atman must be wrong, and returning immediately to Prajapathi with fuel in hand, intimated his doubts to him. Thereupon Prajapathi said to him, "Your doubts are quite relevant. I shall teach you again, but live here in my abode for another thirty-two years as a religious student."

After Indra had spent that period of time in the prescribed manner, Prajapathi said to him one day, "He is that immortal and fearless one who moves about in dream enjoying the various pleasures of the dream-world." Having heard this, Indra again departed, but once more on the way his mind was beset with doubt whether the dream-self could really be the immortal and fearless Brahman. So he returned to Prajapathi, who, on seeing him come back for a second time, said, "Having departed again with your mind satisfied, why have you returned again?" To this Indra replied, "Though this dream-self whom

you have described as the Atman is not rendered blind when the body becomes blind, one-eyed when the body becomes one-eyed, or is not affected in any way by the discrepancies of the body, and even survives the death of the body, yet it feels at times in dream that it is killed or chased and afflicted with pain in various ways, and is thus rendered unhappy. I do not, therefore, find any satisfaction in this knowledge of the dream-self." On hearing this Prajapathi said, "It is even as you have said, 'Stay here for another thirty-two years, and I shall explain to you further'."

After Indra had fulfilled this condition, Prajapathi said to him, "That being who in sound sleep remains at perfect rest undisturbed by dream—He is Brahman, the fearless and the immortal." Indra thereupon departed, but again on his way he felt that it was impossible to reconcile the unconsciousness of man in the state of deep sleep with the idea of fearlessness, immortality and bliss associated with Atman. He, therefore, came back to the abode of Prajapathi, and on being asked the cause of his return, said, "In the state of sound sleep the self neither perceives itself as 'This am I', nor all these beings belonging to the world of manifestation. With the disappearance of objects the subject also ceases to be, and in the state that follows, the self appears to have reached annihilation. Hence I find no good in this state too." On hearing this Prajapathi said, "It is even as you have said. I shall explain to you further about the same Atman of whom I spoke to you on previous years. But stay here for another five years more."

Thus even Indra, the king of gods, had to live the strenuous life of a religious student for a period of one hundred and one years on the whole before he could free himself from all mental impurities and became fit to understand the true nature of the Self. Surely this Knowledge for which the king of gods thought it worthwhile to toil incessantly for one hundred and one years must be the supreme end of man, in comparison with which the short-lived glories of this world fade into insignificance.

III

Indra having now completed the additional period of five years, Prajapathi said to him one day, "You desire to gain that knowledge by which you can feel yourself as a distinct individuality ruling over all the worlds and enjoying all desirable things. Your fear regarding the disappearance of your individuality and consciousness of the world evidently points to this idea you have in mind. But the stainless, immortal and deathless Atman, referred to in my original declaration, and pointed out by me in my successive instructions to you, cannot be attained by one having a body, by virtue of which alone one retains one's individuality. For the body, whether gross or subtle, is perishable, threatened as it is by death every moment of its existence. This perishable body belongs to the immortal and serene Being, the Atman, who, due to identification, finds Himself bound up with the pleasure and pain pertaining to it. As the incorporeal Spirit, the Self of all, He is, however, free from the bondage of pleasure and pain resulting from the false notion of identity with

the perishable body and from the idea of individuality arising from it. Akasa, lightning and thunder—the bodiless forces of nature—, having risen above the earth and reached the highest light, appear in their own form. Even so the serene Being (the Atman), having overcome ignorance—through which alone he has been identifying himself with the body, and thinking, 'I am so and so, I am the son of such and such a man, I am born, I am old, I shall die,' etc.,—and having thereby realised his true nature through the instruction of the Guru and scriptures and through his own effort, rises above the body-idea and recognises himself as the Supreme Being, superior to the self realised as manifest or unmanifest in the eye, or in dream, or in deep sleep. As the Self of all, he enjoys the delights of all the worlds, and is quite unaware of the body and the miseries and enjoyments connected with it. He is realised as the Person in the eye when the sense of sight is withdrawn into the subtle space within the eye, and for his use is the sense of sight. He who thinks, 'May I smell'—he is the Purusha, and for his use is the sense of smell. He who knows, 'May I speak'—he is the Purusha, and for his use is the power of speech. He who thinks, 'May I hear'—he is the Purusha, and for his use is the power of hearing. He is the power and the director behind all the senses of man; these senses being there only to minister to the needs of that Purusha. The one who knows, 'May I think'—he is the Atman. He cognises the functions of the senses and the mind, not as an agent, but as one whose very nature is Knowledge, just as the sun shines because brightness is His nature. In

contrast to the senses, which work only during the present time, the mind is his divine eye, since it acts as an organ of perception for him in the past, present and future. Freed from ignorance and the limitation of the body and the senses resulting from it, and with the sole limitation of the purified and divine mind, He, the liberated one, experiences the delights of all the worlds, established as He is in the feeling of identity with the Self of all."

What Indra had learnt from Prajapathi as a result of his one hundred and one years' stay in His abode, he taught to the gods, and they in turn, having meditated on the Self, realised their identity with the Self of all and thus obtained all the worlds as well as all the desires pertaining to them. This experience is not, however, the privilege of the lucky gods, but it can be had even to-day by man, though they are short-lived and of little understanding in comparison with the gods. For such is the unequivocal declaration of Prajapathi.

The Upanishad has, in the form of the foregoing dialogue, expounded the highest wisdom of Vedanta in a nut-shell. Like Virochana, man in

the infancy of his intelligence regards the body as the Self, and feels supreme satisfaction in ministering to its needs. But with the growth of discriminative faculty, he realises, as Indra did, the perishableness of the body and the finiteness of the pleasures connected with it. Becoming a seeker after truth, he takes the help of the Guru and scripture, and directed by them, he analyses the contents of the three states of consciousness, viz., of waking, dream and deep sleep, and passes on from one conception of Atman to another. Discarding first the conception of the Self as the body, then of the Self as an individual spirit residing within a body, and finally of the Self as the unmanifested state of intelligence pertaining to deep sleep, he passes beyond the bondage of ignorance born of individuality, and realises his true nature as the Self of all. Only by the realisation of this supreme state can man aspire to perfect bliss ; for then alone does he go beyond the sway of hunger, old age and death, the unavoidable accompaniments of the body and the consequent sense of individuality. /



THE SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK IN THE WEST—I

By Gaston De Mengel

[M. Gaston De Mengel contributed a learned article on 'The Traditional Movement in Europe' to the November issue of the *Vedanta Kesari* in 1933. In the present article, he gives a penetrating study of the bases of European culture, as expressed in its two great races, the Latin and the Teutonic. In the second part of this article which will be published next month, he will deal with some of the forces working for spiritual revival in the West in modern times.]

TO understand properly the nature of Western culture, we need a key to Western mentality. This key will be given us if we hark back to the beginnings of Western peopling. It is acknowledged that the great bulk of Western peoples (including the white Americans, all issued from European emigrants) is of Celto-Teutonic origin. Now, the Celts and Teutons were Aryans, and came to Europe in consequence of the onset of the last glacial period, which rendered their primitive home in the Arctic regions uninhabitable (see Tilak's "The Arctic Home in the Vedas"). It is not too bold a surmise to make, that those of the Aryans who wandered as far as Europe, more particularly Western Europe, were among the most adventurous and independent of the race; and a strong dose of individualism is the usual concomitant of a spirit of adventure and independence. This individualism, which is mellowed where a high spiritual culture prevails, was, in the present instance, enhanced and hardened by the fact that the emigrated Aryans who peopled Europe had relapsed into partial barbarism. And thus it is that at the root of Western mentality lies individualism.

Individualism is right and proper in the realms of energy and action, but in the world of the Universal there is no place for it. To intro-

duce it there is an impossibility, and the attempt to do so leads inevitably to a negation of the supra-individual, and therefore supra-human, faculty of intellectual-intuition, by which alone the Universal can be known, and to its substitution by purely human reason, essentially limited in its nature, liable to error, and incapable of metaphysical knowledge. As the only true guide of energy and action is the knowledge of metaphysical principles, it follows that the attempt to introduce individualism in the world of ideas deprives civilisation of its guiding light, even when it pretends to give it a so-called metaphysical basis which is but an individual philosophical system. Such is the fundamental error of the West.

Let India beware lest she should fall a prey to the canker of Western individualism, which already has begun to contaminate her body, if not her soul. Though we are entering the worst phases of the Kali-yuga, yet must there be somewhere in the world a Noah's Ark to preserve the seeds of Tradition for the blossoming forth of a new age. May India maintain herself worthy to fulfil that noble task!

II

Of all European peoples, the French undoubtedly are those who have carried individualism to the greatest extreme. This is all the more curious

as the French are far from being a homogenous whole ; they are an ethnical mixture, varying from the Celtic Briton to the Greco-Iberian Provençal. Their unity was made by their kings, themselves members of the Teutonic conquering tribes; this unity was at one time, that of Karl the Great (Charlemagne), of a traditional nature, being a collection of legitimately diversified and autonomous principalities and maintained in harmonious relations (so far as was possible among such strongly individualistic people) by a spiritual link, *viz.*, that of Christianity; but soon that traditional empire broke down, and, after many vicissitudes, there appeared in its place a number of provinces with decreasing autonomy,—the link which secured their unity gradually ceasing to be spiritual, eventually to become a purely human, artificial one, that of nationality. The Gaulish spirit of indiscipline, however, seems to have contaminated more or less all the ethnical groups composing the French nation; hence the history of France is a continual struggle to maintain a well-nigh impossible harmony, with occasional and short-lived success under exceptionally clever rulers—to-day, the rulers having become a multitude, each member of which cares more for his own position and pocket than for the people's welfare, we have the spectacle of ever-changing governments, dire misrule, and shameless speculations. Honest, hard-working people there are certainly in numbers ; but, with honourable exceptions, they are to be found in modest situations, and rather among the peasantry and small industries than among the big-factory workers, who are greatly contaminated by

communism. Even among the honest workers, manual or intellectual, it is difficult, however, to secure co-ordinated action, except under the dire pressure of circumstances: the average Frenchman is so jealous of what he calls his "liberty" that he will not even subject himself to a training that will secure self-mastery, and does not realise that this so-called "liberty" is but the tyranny of his lower self and the abdication of his will (which he too often confuses with mere energy). The result is to be seen everywhere in the disorder which characterise the French social life: a Frenchman, on his own admission, will walk on the grass if you tell him to "keep off the grass", and will leap a barrier to come in by the exit or go out by the entrance; police regulations are posterred on the walls, and go no further, witness the disgraceful state of the stairways and carriages in the underground, strewn with paper and other refuse.

Passing on to the intellectual plane, the extreme individualism of the French takes the shape of an exaggerated importance attached to what they call "clear ideas," *i.e.*, sharply defined, neatly delimited and, so to speak, "pigeon-holed" concepts, together with great mental activity, versatile and delighting in complications, and a love of reason and logic amounting almost to worship (in fact, under the French Revolution, a temple had been dedicated to Reason). And as mental activity implies activity of the cognitive faculties (*Jñanendriyas*), the French are not only acute observers but have undue regard for form. Hence their propensity for mere literature and oratory, which will make them accept (in con-

tradition with the logic they pride themselves upon) often worthless ideas, provided they be clothed in fine language, and disregard profound conceptions which are expressed without much regard for style. Hence also their predominance in decorative art, and their music, which is purely objective, and does not go beyond clever assemblages of sound, endeavouring at best to portray concrete things or purely mental states, but utterly devoid of inspiration or "soulfulness". This feature is common to all their other arts, including that of poetry, and rare indeed are the exceptions. Be it noted that "form", with the French, does not imply adhesion to a canon, even purely conventional, and France is the birth-place *par excellence* of all sorts of eccentricities in art and literature.

Naturally, the French worship of "clear ideas" and mere reason makes them reject all supra-individual knowledge, and treat with contempt notions, however transcendental, which cannot be clearly and easily expressed (and they often quote one of their "poets," Boileau, to that effect: "Ce qui se comprend bien s'enonce clairement, Et les mots pour le dire arrivent aisement"; i.e.: "What is well understood is clearly expressed and the words, therefore, come easily"); difficult indeed is it to make them admit that certain realities are verily inexpressible! That is why, probably, there are no French mystics—none, at least sufficiently great to be easily recalled,—whilst even in their philosophical systems, the French are, with very few exceptions, far from even an inkling of metaphysical truths. French culture, in brief, is, on the social plane, egotistic, undisciplined

and disorderly; on the intellectual plane, purely humanistic; on the spiritual plane, practically non-existent, if we except the religious minority.

III

Most of what we have said concerning the French may be predicted of their "Latin" neighbours, the Italians and the inhabitants of the Iberian peninsula. Bearing in mind our remarks about the ancestry of all the above peoples, it stands to reason that the term "Latin" does not denote an ethnical group; it designates those who speak Latin-derived languages, and hence embodies also the whites of South-America, who are of Spanish or Portuguese origin. The Latin languages were the vehicles of the type of civilisation developed by the Italots, the cultural descendants of which are very proud of their "Latin" culture, "le genie latin", as the French say. We have seen, in the case of the latter, what this culture amounts to. On the social plane, the Italians, provided they be governed by a strong hand, can rise to a much higher degree than the French: twenty years ago, they were just as dirty, disorderly and undisciplined; but they have since then been brought by Mussolini to a pitch of social culture comparable to that of the Teutonic peoples. I am told that the Spaniards and Portuguese are much the same as the Italians, and that, particularly, the cities of the Argentine Republic in South America can vie with those of present-day Italy, at any rate in the social order. On the intellectual plane, the Italian and Iberian neighbours of the French share their peculiarities and their "humanistic" spirit; but their paint-

ing and their music (especially that of the old Italians) reveal an inspiration denied to the French. Not being as ratiocinative (shall we say "argumentative") as the French or the Greeks, they have no pre-eminent philosophers; but, on the other hand, they have given Europe the majority of its great theologians and mystics, as witness St. Thomas Aquinas, Suarez, Dante Alighieri, St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa of Avila. (It is to be noted that Spanish civilisation has been, through the Moors, greatly influenced by the Arabs, to whom indeed, the higher culture of Europe has been more indebted than is generally acknowledged.) We can therefore consider Italian (if not also Spanish) culture as a whole to be, under favourable circumstances, at a higher level than French culture, and to evince, now and again, some true spirituality.

IV

The Teutonic, or Nordic, peoples are often contrasted with the (improperly called, as we have seen) "Latin races". The contrast is not so great as may be supposed. On the social plane, especially, the speakers of the Latin tongues can, under proper management, and with the exception of the hopelessly undisciplined French, be made to equal the Teutonics. The difference is, that whereas the Latins need to have the social discipline enforced upon them, the Teutonics are by nature more or less inclined to it; this is particularly noticeable with the Germans, less so with the English. To account for such, let us remember that Teutonic individualism is less egotistic than that of peoples with a Celto-Iberian ancestry; it takes the

shape of what may be called the "team-spirit"; also, the love of form which, with the Latins, manifests itself in literature and art, comes out, among Teutonic peoples, as orderly action and social decorum, with the necessary concomitant of external self-mastery. We employ the term "external" advisedly. An Englishman, for instance, may manage to suppress all show of emotion, whilst fairly seething with it inside. There is no need to tell a Hindu that this is no true mastery. The Germans, we believe, especially those of the Southern Provinces, are more expansive.

If, on the social plane, Teutonic individualism is less egotistic, it is, on the other hand, particularly virulent as national and racial pride: the English and the Germans are firmly convinced of their superiority over all other peoples, and the former (together with their American brothers) add to this a particularly objectionable contempt for those whose skin is of a hue different from theirs. The Latins, and notably the French, are much more ready to acknowledge and admire the virtues of other peoples, and a Frenchman will commune with even a Negro as he would with one of his own colour. We know too little of other Teutonic peoples, such as the Scandinavians and the Dutch, to give any personal opinion as to their culture, social or intellectual; from what we have been told, they are, socially, much as the English, but less overweening, and, intellectually, much as the Germans, but more supple—it would seem that the Scandinavians are more truly cultured than the other Teutonic peoples.

Intellectually, the Germans are often considered to be the most cultured of the Teutonic peoples, if not of all Europeans. If we limit intellectuality to erudition and painstaking attention to details, this is no doubt true; but the German mind is much less agile and versatile than that of the Latins, and is apt to run in a groove of narrow specialisation. Teutonic individualism, on the mental plane, tends more to delimit the subject than the idea; also, it is more concrete than abstract, and hence is particularly drawn to practical application. This last feature is particularly distinctive of the English mind, the Germans not being so exclusively practical, as witness their important contributions to Western Philosophy. Whether this feature it was that gave rise to the Baconian movement, or whether the school of philosophy headed by Bacon gradually so moulded the English mind, is difficult to decide. Perhaps the latter is nearer the truth, considering that in the early part of the XIIth century, thousands of young Englishmen moved by their keen interest in metaphysics, affronted the hardships of a then adventurous voyage, to listen in the University of Paris, to the discourses of Abelard and other celebrated scholastics. To-day, the English mind is not only indifferent to metaphysics, but is distinctly anti-metaphysical. The contrary seems to be the case with the Germans, who are considered to be superior to the Latins in this respect. Indeed, for one Frenchman who takes an interest in metaphysics, you will find fifteen Germans; the trouble is that the German mind is blurred by a mist of sentiment, and is too apt to

bring everything down to a psychology more or less vague and fanciful. A striking example of this is given by Andre Preau in an essay on a Taoist text, "The Secret of the Golden Flower of the One Supreme", translated by Richard Wilhelm, with a long introduction by Dr. C. G. Jung, the well-known psycho-analyst. In this essay ("La Fleur d'Or du Supreme Un et le Taoisme sans Tao"; Chacornac Paris, 1931), M. Preau strongly criticises the fanciful interpretations of Dr. Jung and his vague and self-contradictory psychological "explanations" of the Chinese text.

The Teutonic intellectual culture is no more free than the Latin one from the infirmity due to the rejection of all but merely human cognitive faculties. As M. Preau says in his essay: "A properly metaphysical teaching exists nowhere in the West: modern European thought either remains clearly on the hither side of the Universal, as in scientific and philosophical theories or else, when it comes across it, as for example in Christian theology, is content with mentioning it, without ever giving it all its worth or drawing from it all the consequences it implies, which comes to say that it does not truly understand it. . . . very rare are the Europeans who have exposed Asiatic metaphysical ideas in a really satisfactory way. . . . and even then these few, must it be added, have all in some way or other had Oriental schooling." Likewise, Albert de Pouvourville (Matgioi), who is one of those rare Europeans (and one of those, rarer still, who have been admitted to the intimacy of perhaps the most exclusive among the secret Taoist centres), says in his "Voie

Metaphysique" (Paris, 1905—now exhausted), which resumes the doctrine of the Yi-King: "There are, if I can count, exactly five Europeans, one of whom has just died, who have received, together with the material means for reading (the traditional texts), the intellectual means for understanding the pith of their reading." To which we may add the comment of Sir John Woodroffe (Arthur Avalon) in his remarkable work "The Serpent Power" (2nd edition; Ganesh & Co., Madras, 1924): "An English education. . . not unfrequently has the effect of divorcing those thus educated, not only from a knowledge of Indian Shastra, but from the possibility of understanding it" (p. 24, note 2). Thus, the Teutonic peoples are, despite German claims, no nearer true metaphysical understanding than the Latins, and the inferiority of Western intellectual culture in this respect is general.

Let the reader bear in mind, however, that we are reviewing *modern* Western culture, as it has developed since the end of the middle ages and the birth of the Renaissance, the very name of which is an irony, for it was, spiritually speaking, a new death rather than a new birth. The spirit of the Middle Ages was much nearer that of the East than that of the modern West, and a few writers here and there, such as those whose names we have already mentioned, have recognized this fact. Let us add, while we think of it, the name of Alphonse de Chateaubriant, who, in a remarkable work in novel form ("La Réponse du Seigneur", i.e., "The Lord's Answer"; Bernard Grasset, Paris, 1933), has vividly portrayed that ancient spirit, and taught his readers a

much needed lesson on the real significance of prayer, the science of which, he declares, is getting lost to the world. "To pray," he says through the mouth of one of the characters of his novel, a descendant of the Templars, "is not to ask in order to receive, but to ask in order to become (receiving being implied in becoming); that prayer is contemplation, the ceaseless viewing of one's ideal, with a vision never leaving its object, and with that infinite breadth of heart to be found in him only who sees himself no more" (p. 205). And that ideal he shows further on to be that of the Self: "And that great Self which encompasses all things. . . is that Infinite Self which you must conceive in your self and invincibly contemplate" (p. 256); for thus, as he illustrates by the analogy of the butterfly becoming bewilderingly similar to the leaf it has constantly looked upon, we become That which we contemplate. We must also make exception for a few mystics like Ruysbroek, Boehme, Swedenborg, etc., whom the Iberian Latins and the Teutonic peoples (the English excepted) have produced.

On the purely humanistic plane, the Teutonics can be ranged with the Iberian Latins, having also produced great poets, artists and musicians, manifesting that gift of inspiration which the French, as we have seen, are so deficient in. On this score even the English are superior to the French, in spite of the fact that their intellectual culture is otherwise the poorest in Europe, owing to that craze for "practical application", which has in the realm of philosophy, produced that "cart-before-the-horse" system called "pragmatism".

Teutonic culture, then, is, on the social plane, superior, if anything, to Latin culture. On the intellectual plane, there is, on the artistic side not much, to choose; whilst, on the purely mental side, the Latins have, on the whole, a wider outlook and a quicker apprehension. And if we consider that there is as much (or as little) spiritual culture on both sides, neither the Latins nor the Teutons can claim to have an outstanding superiority one over the other. Both having reduced themselves to merely human guidance in government, social life and intellectual life, and having devoted themselves more and more in consequence, to purely practi-

cal and material ends, they may be looked upon, from the point of view of tradition, as being on the same level of degeneration.

We have no need to examine, even did space allow, the culture of the Slavs, for they have made no sufficient contribution to European culture, if we except their wonderful but purely instinctive art. The Slavs are all sentiment, apathetic and easily led (and beguiled) in their social life, and in their intellectual life, too dreamy and fanciful to rise to any height. Spiritually they are null, and their so-called mysticism is nothing but sentimental bigotry.

(To be concluded.)

THE SACRED GOSPEL OF SRI VAISHNAVAS

By A. Srinivasachariar B.A., L.T.

[The writer of this article is a pious and erudite Sri Vaishnava. He will be writing a series of articles on Sri Vaishnavism, in the *Vedanta Kesari* in the course of this year. In the present article he deals with the Tirumantra of the Sri Vaishnavites.]

THE spiritual and cultural traditions of the Sri Vaishnavas are centred chiefly in and around three great texts of profound significance, which have been called respectively the Great Mantra (Tirumantra), the Sacred Couplet (Dvayam) and the Final Verse (Charama Sloka). No one can be considered a true Vaishnava, who has not been initiated into the mysteries of these Mantras; for, therein are summed up the principles and practices of Vaishnavism; and all the Vaishnavite scriptures and other works based on them are only commentaries, brief or elaborate, on those triple Mantras of hoary anti-

quity. The spiritual life of a Vaishnava is nurtured by them and them alone, the Great Mantra being his food, the Sacred Couplet his drink, and the Final Verse the very air he breathes. "Fix thy mind on Me, fix thy intellect on Me; thou shalt live in Me hereafter undoubtedly"—so said Sri Krishna to Arjuna; and in accordance with His commandment, a Vaishnava seeks to fix his mind on God by trying to feel the meanings of these Mantras and rendering unselfish service to Him, and to fix his intellect on Him by his study of the Sanskrit and Tamil Vedas—the Vedanta Sutras and the hymns of

Alwars—and the elaborate philosophical and devotional commentaries on those works. The typical Sri Vaishnava is only a personification of the ideas and ideals that are embodied in these Mantras.

These Mantras are regarded as the keys that unlock the gates of salvation to the suffering humanity. Being revealed by God, the Supreme Teacher of all teachers, out of His infinite compassion, in one or another of His incarnations, to highly qualified disciples under special circumstances that called forth these teachings of inestimable value, and being handed down to posterity through an unbroken line of teachers, they form naturally the most cherished divine heritage of the Vaishnavas, and their soul-saving spiritual efficacy is beyond question. The Acharyas down to Peria Nambi, the teacher of Sri Ramanuja, in view of the sacredness of the trust bequeathed to them, invested the Mantras with a certain amount of secrecy and made it a point always to impart them only to persons possessing the requisite high qualifications demanded by the Shastras. It was their well-considered opinion that there can be no greater sacrilege than casting pearls of divine wisdom before the swinish common folk steeped in lust and greed. Even the great Sri Ramanuja was not exempted from the rigorous Shastric tests that were repeatedly applied to him by his stern teacher, purposely to ascertain his true worth and fitness to be favoured with the secret teachings. But it was reserved only to Sri Ramanuja to view the question from a new angle of vision born of all-encompassing compassion, and to point out that these pearls of divine

lustre like the sun can lose nothing by their exposure to the impious gaze of the ignorant multitude. With his unique religious liberalism characteristic of him, he initiated quite an array of persons into the mysteries of these Mantras, and the teachings thus spread throughout the length and breadth of South India, shedding their benign influence on saints and sinners alike. Thenceforth, taking the cue from Sri Ramanuja—the central gem in the diamond-necklace of the spiritual hierarchy of Vaishnava teachers that sheds its illumination on both sides—his followers continued the task of rendering immortal service to humanity by expounding the grand secrets of salvation in their original works of great merit or in their lucid and masterly commentaries on them so that, in their own words, 'even the women folk and the ignorant masses may know.'

Of the three Mantras referred to before, the Couplet is a detailed explanation of the Great Mantra, and the final Sloka of the Gita is an exposition of the Couplet. The Great Mantra, a formula of eight letters and consisting of the three words, 'Om' 'Namo' and 'Narayana', teaches the Artha Panchaka or the five truths relating to the individual self, God, the *summum bonum*, the means of obtaining God and the removal of obstacles. According to the Vaishnavas the Pranava or the symbol Om signifies that the Jivatman or the soul is the servant of its sole master, Narayana, the Creator and Protector of the Universe, and as such, is bound to do service for Him only and none else. The soul is Existence, Knowledge and Bliss according to the

Vedas, say some; but this refers to its primary attributes only, its essential nature being described as Seshatva or existence solely for the appropriation of its master, God. The soul as the property of God is at the free disposal of its master and can claim no interest for itself. This internal inherent nature of the soul is its distinguishing trait and the indispensable condition of its very existence, and yet being endowed with knowledge, the soul is conscious of its dependence on God unlike inanimate beings that cannot realise their being instruments of sentient creatures having their own will. The knowing aspect of the soul's nature, of course, carries with it the willing aspect, which in its turn brings the idea of responsible agentship; but the knowledge that the soul exists solely for its master cannot breed egoistic or self-centred activity, as the agentship and freedom it involves are only in the direction determined by its innate nature of being bound by eternal ties of selfless service to the master. The freedom of the self consists in the persistent, consistent and insistent direction of all its energies along channels of disinterested service to the Supreme Being and in the continuous prevention of their flowing along channels of self-satisfaction, self-seeking or self-interest, until the self-will is completely annihilated and activity becomes a joyous, spontaneous and incessant out-pouring towards the Lord, much like the flow of rivers towards the ocean or the turning of the sunflower towards the sun. The initial voluntary attunement to the Divine Will undergoes in course of time a silent metamorphosis into an invo-

luntary *at-one-ment* with it. (The Seshatva attitude, *i.e.*, the servant-I attitude thus develops into the Paratantriya attitude, *i.e.*, the tool-I attitude). Herein lies freedom in bondage, the freedom of absolute self-surrender to God, the freedom of loving service as a means of satisfaction to God, arising from the realisation of the soul's nature. This sort of service that tends to liberate the Jiva from the trammels of Samsara and is of the nature of joy, is the very antipodes of slavery widely prevalent in the world, that is irksome and compulsory, imposed by self-interest and sustained by a sense of fear.

Again, God has a dual personality as the Supreme Ruler and the All-loving Lakshmi (Sri), representing the twin principles of justice and mercy which condition each other and are conditioned by each other in the Divine administration of the world. Hence the protection of the soul by God implies also the function of mediation by Sri, the Mother of the Universe and the redemptive principle in Divine Nature, by virtue of Her inseparable association with the Supreme Being like the attribute with the substance; and service rendered by the soul to Narayana is accepted by Her also. The position of Lakshmi as 'the living copula between the finite and infinite, as the connecting link between God and man, clinging as the Mother of the Universe with intense affection to the Father of the Universe on the one hand and to Her mortal children on earth on the other hand, is beautifully symbolised by the central situation of the letter 'U' representing Lakshmi between 'A' and 'M'—in Om

(Aum)—representing God and Jiva respectively.

Thus the Pranava points out the ideal of Seshatva or absolute serviceability and dependence on God of the individual soul as the true nature of the soul; and such an ideal relation

can subsist only by the unremitting endeavour on the part of the soul to renounce the three deep-rooted false feelings of personal freedom, individual competency, and self-enjoyment in every thought, word and deed.

(To be continued.)

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

(OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

WE have seen that in Narada's description of the highest Bhakti as found exemplified in the lives of the Gopis of Brindavan, all the functions of the mind, viz., intellect, emotion and will, are fully represented. The intellect is found to be active in cognising the glory and majesty of God, the emotion in experiencing the delight of God's bliss and the will in consecrating all activities by complete surrender to Him. Now the question arises whether the highest realisation consists merely in the enhancement and purification of these various powers of the mind. In the next nine Sutras, Narada discusses this question and comes to the conclusion that Para Bhakti or the highest spiritual realisation is something more than all these, although all these too incidentally result from such realisation, and that it really does not constitute the *result* of any spiritual practice but is a mere *manifestation* of some inexplicable, ineffable experience of the natural perfection of the

soul. Incidentally the relative importance of the various powers of the mind in producing the conditions necessary for such manifestation of the already existing perfection of the soul, is also considered.

सा तु कर्मज्ञानयोगेभ्योऽप्यधिकतरा ॥ २५ ॥

सा That (Parabhakti) तु but कर्मज्ञानयोगेभ्यः Than Karma, Jnana and Yoga अपि also अधिकतरा greater.

25. But Para Bhakti (as described before) is also something more than Karma, Jnana and Yoga.

Note. The comparison here made is not between the various methods of spiritual practice which are called Yogas, but between the highest spiritual realisation on the one hand and the various kinds of spiritual practice involving the exercise of various powers of the mind, on the other. Karma stands for Karma Yoga, the exercise of will; Jnana stands for

Jnana Yoga, the exercise of the intellect and reason; and Yoga stands for the Bhakti Yoga or the exercise of the emotions. The question may arise as to why Raja Yoga is not represented in this scheme. The answer is given by Madhusudana Saraswati in his Bhaktirasayana, that Raja Yoga is only a department of Jnana Yoga. Or it may be taken that Raja Yoga, being only the Yoga of meditation, is a part of all the three Yogas, as noted by Sandilya in his Sutra 19: "Yoga is for the benefit of both, because of its indispensableness to both." The Bhagavan himself classifies the Yogas as only three in number, from the psychological standpoint, in Bhagavata xi.20.6: "With a view to effect the liberation of men, I have inculcated three Yogas or methods, viz., those of knowledge, work and devotion. There is no other means anywhere." Even the highest spiritual experience itself is liable to be evaluated from the standpoint of one or other of these several powers of the mind. Thus Sankara considers it a kind of vision of Truth. The emotional Ramanuja, Chaitanya Deva and others, view it as an experience of the highest love. The Smritikaras like Yajnavalkya consider it as the highest Dharma. *Vide* Yajnavalkya Smriti: "The realisation of the Atman through the Yogas is the highest Dharma."

Among modern writers on Religion in the West, we find the same difference in the emphasis. For example, the intellectual school is represented by Max Muller, Herbert Spencer, Von Hartmann, etc. Thus Max Muller says in his 'Origin of Religion', that it is an apprehension of the Infinite. In his 'First Principles' Herbert Spencer

characterises it as a complete recognition of the ultimate mystery. In his 'Religion of the Future', Von Hartmann speaks of it as a consciousness of our practical relation to an invisible spiritual order. Romanes in 'Thoughts on Religion' conceives it as a department of Thought, having for its object a self-conscious and intelligent Being. In his 'Philosophy of Religion', Hegel describes it as a knowledge possessed by the finite mind of its nature as Absolute Mind. Jevons in 'History of Religion' calls it a perception of invisible things, of Him, through the things that are made. Munsterburg in his 'Eternal Values', speaks of it as a form of apprehension through supra-personal consciousness.

The emotional school is represented by Schleirmacher, Rudolf Otto, Tiele, Mc Taggart, etc. Schleirmacher tells us that religion consists in certain feelings of absolute dependence upon God. Tiele says that it is a pure and reverential disposition which we call piety, its essence consisting in adoration which is a compound of holy awe, humble reverence, grateful acknowledgment of every token of love, hopeful confidence, lowly self-abasement, a deep sense of one's own unworthiness and shortcomings, total self-abnegation, unconditional conservation of one's whole life and one's whole faculties, and a desire to possess the adored object and call it entirely one's own. To Mc Taggart, it is an emotion resting on the conviction of a harmony between ourselves and the universe at large. Pfliederer says that in the religious consciousness, knowing and willing are not ends in themselves as in science and morality, but rather subordinated to feeling as the real centre

of religious consciousness. Stratton says that it is an appreciation of an unknown world, usually an unseen company. Greanleaf Thompson says that it is an aggregate of those sentiments of the human mind arising in connection with relations assumed to exist between the order of Nature and a postulated Supernatural. Comenius says that it is an inner veneration by which the mind of man attaches and binds itself to the Supreme Godhead. Professor Rudolf Otto calls it the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*.

The Practical or Voluntaristic School has its representatives in Prof. James and others. So to James it is a harmonious adjustment to an unseen order on which our supreme good depends. Reville sees in it a harmonious synthesis between one's destiny and the opposing influences one meets in this world. Stanley calls it a biological mode of reaction to high superiorities of environment. Frazer takes it as a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to control and direct the course of Nature and of human life. Marshall calls it the restraint of individualistic impulses to racial ones. Comte calls it the regulation of individual nature. Davidson views it as placing oneself in harmony with time's environment. Sabatier views it as a commerce, a conscious and willed relation into which a soul in distress enters with the mysterious power on which, it feels that it and its destiny depend. The most notable protagonist of this view is Kant who calls it a recognition of all our duties as Divine commands.

A careful consideration of these various views would make it clear that

all of them are only partial views of the real truth, and that they really represent only the external opinion of third persons about the spiritual consciousness as it manifests itself in others, and to which they themselves are strangers. Their views cannot be therefore held to be correct. The spiritual experience in itself has nothing to do with the powers of the mind, which have to be transcended in the final stages of Sadhana. It is something unique and refuses to be described in terms of the mental powers, although all the faculties have to be purified and intensified and united before such realisation takes place.

फलरूपत्वात् ॥ २६ ॥

26. For it is of the nature of the fruit of all these.

Note. This gives one of the reasons for the superiority of spiritual experience to the various Yogas. The Yogas are only methods of practice and are needed only so long one has not realised the highest. They only help the aspirant on his way to the goal. The Para Bhakti described above is, on the other hand, the goal itself, and as such is superior, in that the Yogas are useless when it is once attained. The Yogas represent a lower stage in spiritual development, and Para Bhakti represents the highest stage.

Instead of saying that it is the fruit, Narada says it is of the nature of fruit. This is only to indicate that, although in the ordinary way it may be spoken of as a result of spiritual practice, really it is not the effect of any Sadhana done by the aspirant. If it is an effect, then it cannot be everlasting, as everything that has come into existence must also pass

out of existence in the natural course of things. In fact the eternality of this experience is the one thing that distinguishes it from such things as the experience of heaven, etc., Sandilya also speaks of it in the same strain in Sutras 8 and 9. That Para Bhakti is not the effect of any action or effort on man's part, is again adverted to by Narada in Sutra 30.

ईश्वरस्याप्यभिमानिद्वेषित्वाद् दैन्यप्रियत्वाच्च ॥२७॥

ईश्वरस्य of Iswara अपि also अभिमानिद्वेषित्वात् because of hatred of egotism दैन्यप्रियत्वात् because of love of humility and. च

27. And also because God hates egotism and loves humility.

Note. This gives another reason why Sadhanas or Yogas are inferior to Para Bhakti. Sadhana or spiritual practice is self-effort, and so one must be conscious of oneself as a separate individual. The realised man is one who has transcended this ego consci-

ousness. In fact it is the ego that prevents the manifestation of Para Bhakti. The Sutra should not, however, be taken to indicate that even God is partial and has His own likes and dislikes. Even a spiritual aspirant should be free from such partiality; then what to say of God! To attribute this partiality to God would be to go against the Bhagavan's own words in the Gita ix.29: "Alike am I to all beings. To Me there is none hateful or dear." The grace of God is always there; only the ego prevents man from taking advantage of it. If man utilises his ego in such a way as to annihilate the ego itself, man is able to benefit by it. It is not the fault of the fire if it warms a man who approaches it, but not one who is away from it. *Vide* also Brahma Sutra II:1.34: "Partiality and cruelty cannot be attributed to God because they depend upon other things, i.e., He dispenses according to the merit and demerit of the individual soul."

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Goraknath and Mediaeval Hindu Mysticism: By Dr. Mohan Singh, M.A., Ph. D., D.Litt. Published by the author from the Oriental College, Lahore. Pages 137 + 22. Price Rs. 25 or £2.

The book is a scholarly treatise presenting the conclusions that the author has arrived at by his researches in regard to the life and philosophy of the celebrated Mediaeval Hindu Mystic, Goraknath. As the author points out, he stands just at the junction between the great Sanskrit traditions of ancient India and the beginnings of Mediaeval Hindu mysticism and Bhakti movement. His influence over the religious life of Northern India has been extensive, as is evidenced by the prevalence

of ideas and practices connected with his name in all the regions extending from Assam to Peshawar. Even to-day one religious sect in Jhelum district, called the Nath Yogis, trace their spiritual lineage from Goraknath.

As in the case of all celebrated spiritual leaders, the historical details of Goraknath's life are cast in oblivion, and what little exists is rendered unreliable by conflicting traditions. A few of the conclusions arrived at by the author after much discussion of available evidence may be stated here. He was born in the area round Peshawar and flourished in the 9th and 10th centuries. In the conflicting traditions there is a veiled indication that he came

from a class in the lowest scale of Hindu society like many other medieval mystics. He was a disciple of Macchendra. He became an ascetic in early life; was a life-long celibate; was beautiful and child-like in appearance; was humble, passionately sympathetic to the poor and distressed, and accessible to all. He had great non-attachment to wealth and the life of the senses. He sacrificed one of his eyes for the benefit of his teacher. The place of his death and burial is unknown. The image of him in Sialkot shows him wearing a long cap and growing a beard.

As for his teachings, his doctrine has been described as Nadanusandhana. Dr. Singh's summary of his teachings is as follows: The goal of human life is to eternalize real life and to understand the real self. This can be done by transcending the lower self which consists of the vital essence—the sexual power, the vital air, and the mind. Each of the three must help to transcend itself by itself. Yet the control of the second gives control of the first and of the third, of the first two. The mind is controlled through stoppage of its out-going tendencies, through intellectual analytical perception or (Jnana), through recitation (Japa) and through the reversal of its normal activity until it reaches the state of self-transcendence. By such control we shall rise to a supra-mental state which is void of the working of these three, but which is a positive state wherein resides the essence of the higher self (Atman)—the three higher powers—namely, Divine music, Divine joy, and Divine consciousness. This is really the fourth state, above those three states wherein the vital breath, the sex and the mind work, each predominant in one or the other of them. By a simple natural method of Kaivalya Kumbhaka (prolongation of the period before intake of breath), physical, moral and mental, the vital air is controlled. By a simple natural method of trying to repeat the word given by the Guru and listening to the inner word (Ajapa Japa), the sex is controlled. And by a simple natural method of the stoppage or negation or emptying out of mental activity aided by physical, moral and spiritual contemplation, the mind is controlled. When the mind sees and resides in the mind, when the mental activity is absorbed

in the mind, when we rise above the pairs of opposites, physically, morally and intellectually and have same-sightedness (Sama-drishti), then comes Asam-prajnata-samadhi or the absorption of the self in the Self beyond all dualism, the Sahaja samadhi or the natural trance, the Turiyatva or supra-mental state, and the Atita Sunya or the Supreme Void which is not void. To practice it, the control of sex is necessary, but such a mental Yoga can be carried on even in married life by suitable and requisite abstinence. Mendicancy and monastic life are not indispensable. There is no demand in this for rigorous Hatha Yoga exercises, or Tantric practices, or Buddhistic self-denials. It is a kind of Raja Yoga of the Upanishads, open to all classes, requiring a mental and moral detachment. The true Guru's aid (word) is indispensable. The power to work miracles is an obstacle on the way, and the aspirant must go above them.

The author points out how the importance of Goraknath can be estimated correctly only in the true historical perspective. Coming, as he did, not long after Sankaracharya, he was one of those responsible for freeing the practice of Yoga from the corrupting influence of Buddhist Tantricism and restoring it to the pristine purity of the days of the Upanishads. He also paved the way for the advent of the Bhakti movements in Mediæval India. In the words of the author, "The study of Gorakh is of incalculable benefit to the students of Hindu Yoga and Bhakti, mediæval and modern; of Indian folklore; of the early Indian vernacular literature; of the reactions between Hinduism and Islam in their first impact."

The present edition contains Forewords, a learned Introduction, translation of some of Gorakh's writings, including the treatise, Gorakh Bodh which is in the form of a conversation between Gorakh and his Guru, and several other extracts in Devanagari characters, which are of interest in the study of Gorakh.

We must, however, opine that the price is rather exorbitant, especially seeing the rather poor get-up of the book. Although the book may not be found very interesting on the whole by the general reader, it will be of much use to scholars, and espe-

cially to those who want to have a deeper insight into Hindu mysticism.

The Ramayana of Tulasidas: *Translated into English from original Hindi by Mr. F. S. Growse B.C.S., M.A. (Oxon.), C.I.E. Published by Ram Narain Lal, Publisher and Book-seller, Allahabad. Seventh Edition, revised and corrected. Pages 671. Price Rs. 4 only.*

The Ramayana of Tulasidas has been offering spiritual sustenance to all devout Hindi-speaking people in India for the last three hundred years. The work being originally composed in Hindi, the principles adumbrated therein have percolated to the lowest strata of society, and these are moulding the popular faith in the vast Hindi-speaking region extending from Hardwar to Assam. Moreover, these verses instinct with sublime spiritual wisdom and centring round the divine life and activities of Rama, one of the incarnations of God, have wielded a potent influence explicitly or implicitly on almost every Indian religious sect in general and Vaishnavism in particular. In recognition of the sublimity and perfection of its content and from the work has been translated into Bengali, another principal language of India. The present volume, an English rendering of the Hindi original, will go a great way in bringing this rich treasure of spiritual wisdom within the easy reach of English-knowing people in India and abroad.

The volume under review is the seventh edition of it revised and corrected, with an illuminating introduction by the translator. One who knows the difficulties encountered in an English translation of Hindi verses in rough colloquial idioms will feel gratified at the success achieved in the translation of this book. We cannot but be struck with the translator's delicate and thoughtful handling of almost every line in adapting the peculiarities of oriental expressions to the requirements of English idiom. The rendering is free from loss of accuracy or lack of appropriate literary adornment. The explanatory references to the Sanskrit Ramayana given in notes have made the literal translation all the more significant. We have nothing but unstinted praise for the book.

(1) Jnana-Yoga ; (2) Raja-Yoga ; (3) Karma-Yoga ; (4) Karma-Yoga and Bhakti-Yoga ; (5) Minor Upanishads ; (6) Essentials of Hinduism ; (7) Siva-Mahimna Stotram: *Published by the Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta. Pp. 430, 303, 143, 106, 92, 72 & 87. Price Re. 1-12, 1-4, As. 12, Rc. 1-8, Re 1, and As. 8 and As 5 respectively.*

All these publications except the last two are revised and greatly improved editions; the first four books on Yoga and the fifth one, Upanishads, have already passed through 4th and 2nd impressions respectively. The fine printing and uniformly excellent get-up of these world-renowned books in handy sizes will surely go to popularise them all the more.

The sixth of the above list of books is a new publication embodying excerpts from the complete works of Swami Vivekananda, very systematically arranged into a manual of Hinduism, keeping up a perfect unity. The topics discussed in this book give a rapid survey of the whole gamut of the religio-philosophical lore of the Hindus. These are: Origin of the word Hindu—The Vedas—Different schools of Thought—Vedanta is not Advaita system only—Smritis—other scriptures—Why different sects—The theory of creation—Brahman—Law of Karma—The Soul—Mukti or Freedom—Life after death—Universalism—Image worship—Guru—Divine Incarnation—Yoga, the means—Raja-Yoga, Karma-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga and Jnana-Yoga—The Goal.

The last of these books is also a new publication. It contains the Sanskrit text of the famous hymn to Siva with word for word and running translation into English and brief notes. The book will be found very useful by all for the culture of devotional life. It is a pocket-size edition, attractively got-up and sold at a low price.

Transcendental Magic : *By Eliphas Levi Translated, annotated and introduced by Arthur Edward Waite. Published by Messrs. Rider & Co., London. Pages 515. New and revised edition. Price sh. 12-6.*

Eliphas Levi is reckoned as one of the best continental expounders of occult science the nineteenth century has pro-

duced. We find many among ancient exponents of the subject eminent in authority, but all yield to him in the creation of a lively interest in the subject; for he was 'actually the spirit of modern thought forcing an answer for the times from old oracles'. The book under review is the English rendering of the world-famous book, "*Dogme Et rituel de la Haute Magie*", written by Eliphas Levi.

The work falls into two parts: in the one the author sets forth the Kabalistic and magical doctrine in its entirety: and it has been done in a manner as to bring about a reconciliation of science and dogma, of

reason and faith. The second part is devoted to ceremonials connected with the practice of transcendental magic and describes the principles of magical operations.

Acquisition of occult powers has no appeal for all. Even mystical type of people have put it under a ban because it does not take one far in the way of solving the fundamental problems of life. Anyway there are people who are prone to occult practices, and to them the book will be welcome, being a valuable addition to the existing occult literature. The price of the present edition has been lowered to make the volume accessible to all.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Relief Work—An Appeal

Swami Madhavananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission issues the following appeal:—

The public is already aware of the terrible distress caused by heavy floods in several districts in and outside Bengal. Thousands of people have been rendered homeless in the affected areas. Great scarcity of food and fodder prevails. For want of food the afflicted poor are facing starvation. The affected area is very vast. We are beginning work in Gopalganj sub-division in Faridpur Dt. We have already deputed three Swamis there to inspect and commence work with the slender resources at our disposal. Funds are urgently required. Work will be extended as money comes, and reports will appear in the Dailies from time to time.

Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P.O., Howrah.

Sri Ramakrishna Thondar Sangam Report for 1937

The report of the above society embodies the excellent work done by its self-sacrificing workers towards the amelioration of the condition of the poor depressed classes in the Cheries, in and around Myslapore. The work is being conducted for the last six years with the help of thirty work-

ers through three centres at Ramakrishnapuram, Pallakkumaniam and Poonthottam. Another centre at Kattukoil Cheri has been added last year. A short summary of the activities of the society is given below:—

Night schools were started in three centres. The strength of the schools is 64, 18 and 34 respectively. Boys are supplied with books, slates, note-books and such other necessary articles. There is a class for adults in the Ramakrishnapuram where besides knowledge of the three R's, regular instruction is also imparted in hygiene, civic subjects and topics of general interest. Efforts are taken for physical improvement, devotional training and encouragement of thrift among the people of these centres. At Ramakrishnapuram Panchayat system has been organised to settle petty disputes.

The members of the Sangham encouraged these people in performance of religious festivals throughout the year, and induced the people of these centres to take regular bath before sunrise and join Sankirthanam daily during the sacred month of Margazhi. Besides, the Sangam organised Scerthirutha Sangham, troop of Boys' Scout, hospital service, excursions, religious festivals for women of these centres and Deepali celebration for boys and children. They have also rendered invaluable services in various ways during the Brahmotsavam of Sri Kapaleswar Temple at Myslapore.

The membership is open to those who will put *one hour's labour of love* per week

for the service of the poor and the needy. This society stands badly in need of such workers. The sad paucity of them stands in the way of extending its activities. We hope, the youths of Madras will help the sacred cause by this minimum quota of personal service.

*

**The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama,
Bankipore, Patna
Report for 1937**

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashram at Patna has completed the 15th year of its existence. During these years it has been rendering valuable service to the public through the different types of activities as noted below:—

(a) Regular scripture-classes on the Upanishads, the Bhagavat Gita and Srimat Bhagavatam were held in different parts of the town. The Swami-in-charge received interviews from persons seeking guidance in personal religious matters.

(b) Special lectures were arranged for the benefit of the public, and lecturing tours were undertaken in various places of Behar.

(c) The Ashram has been conducting a Free Primary School for the boys of the cultivating and the labouring people. The number of students has come upto 38. Another day-school also has been started in a neighbouring village for the same purpose.

(d) A free students' Home is being maintained for imparting sound home-training to the college students of Patna University. For want of funds, the Ashram could not maintain more than 2 students.

The management is contemplating to start a free charitable dispensary, a matter of urgent necessity for the poor people of the locality. An initial contribution of Rs. 5,000 can set the work on foot. We appeal to the public to complete this project of great public utility by contributions.

**The Ramakrishna Mission, Singapore
Report for 1936-1937**

The Ramakrishna Mission at Singapore with its diverse departments of useful acti-

vities has made steady progress in all directions during the years under review. The report shows expansion of activities as well as efficient management of work. The activities of this centre fall under the following heads:—

1. *Social and Literary*:—Lectures on different subjects were delivered by distinguished people at the Mission premises.

2. *Religious*:—Regular classes were held by the resident minister, Swami Bhaswarananda on every Tuesday and Friday. Besides, lectures on religious subjects were also delivered by prominent persons on appropriate occasions.

3. *Educational*:—Activities under this head comprises management of Vivekananda Tamil School, Vivekananda afternoon English School and Saradamani Girls' School. In the management of these schools the Mission seeks to impart the right type of education emphasising character-building and efficiency on a religious basis. The schools made great headway towards progress during these years.

4. *Mass Education*:—The mission is conducting a night school to impart free tuition in Tamil and English to the working classes of all nationalities. The monthly average attendance is 85. The curriculum comprises English, Tamil, simple Arithmetic, Geography, rules of Hygiene and moral training. Mention may be made of regular lantern lecture on Ramayana, Mahabharata, hygiene and religious ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. These lectures will be extended to suburban areas in the near future.

5. *Other activities*:—These are: (a) maintenance of a Library and Reading Room; (b) free distribution of medicines to all the poor students of the Mission schools; (c) free distribution of clothing, milk, rice and cash on the eve of Deepavali, and on Lord Krishna's Birthday, to the poor and helpless; (d) organisation of sports meet; (e) Navarathri celebrations.

A big charitable work like this should be placed on a sound financial basis. It cannot depend on donations and subscriptions on monthly basis. So united efforts are necessary to create a large permanent endowment fund.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXV]

SEPTEMBER, 1938

[No. 5

HINDU ETHICS

दोषहेतूनशेषांश्च वक्ष्यात्मा यो निरस्यति । तस्य धर्मार्थक्रामानां हानिर्नाल्यापि जायते ॥
सदाचाररतः प्राज्ञो विद्याविनयशिक्षितः । हितं मितं प्रियं काले वक्ष्यात्मा योऽभिभाषते ॥
पापेऽप्यपापः परुषे ह्यभिधत्ते प्रियाणि यः । भैत्रीद्ववान्तःकरणः तस्य मुक्तिः करे स्थिता ॥
ये कामक्रोधलोभानां वीतरागा न गोचरे । सदाचारस्थितास्तेषामनुभावैर्धृता मही ॥
तस्मात् सत्यं वदेत् प्राज्ञो यत् परप्रीतिकारणम् । सत्यं यत् परदुःखाय तदा मौनपरो भवेत् ॥
प्रियमुक्तं हितं नैतदिति मत्वा न तद् वदेत् । श्रेयस्तत्र हितं वाच्यं यद्यप्यत्यन्तमप्रियम् ॥
प्राणिनामुपकाराय यथैवेह परतः च । कर्मणा मनसा वाचा तदेव मतिमान् भजेत् ॥

The observance of moral and spiritual laws, acquisition of wealth and enjoyment of pleasures, are not a bit adversely affected by a rejection of every wrong means, in the case of a person who is a master of his own self. The intelligent man, quite at home in the sciences as well as in polite behaviour, takes delight in noble practices. He delivers by measure wholesome words, and that on the proper occasion. Verily liberation is within easy reach for him who is never of evil intent even to the wicked, who speaks soothing words to the harsh and who is overflowing with friendly love. The world is held together by the prowess of such persons who are established in excellent conduct, allowing no room for lust, anger and greed. One endowed with intelligence, therefore, must speak truth—truth that is liked by others. He ought to keep mum if truth is productive of misery for another. What is to the liking of another, if it is not for his real good, that too must not be given out. It is certainly preferable to express what is conducive to good even though it is vehemently disliked. A prudent man must have recourse to that alone by thought, word and deed, which will do good to living beings both in the seen and unseen worlds.

Vishnu Purana.

WHAT IS BONDAGE?—I

[In this and the ensuing issues for the year, we shall publish a series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna's views on the fundamental problems of spiritual life, based on his recorded sayings. In the course of these studies we shall also have occasion to take a passing view of many questions of absorbing interest in modern life and thought. 'What is bondage?—I', is the fifth of the series.]

I

IN the last instalment we considered the various meanings in which the Master uses the word Maya. Of these meanings, the one most important for the spiritual aspirant is the expression of Maya in the world as the twin forces of Avidya (Ignorance) and Vidya (Knowledge) working for the bondage and liberation of man respectively. In considering 'What is Bondage?' we shall be analysing the Master's conception of the former of these, namely, Avidya Maya.

Like all the great Hindu sages, the Master holds that the root of bondage, and therefore of ignorance, lies in egotism or the sense of individuation. According to him, man's ego itself is Maya, the veil that shuts out the Light; and it is only with the death of the ego that all troubles cease. A screen held between two persons sitting very close shuts them off from each other's vision. When Rama and Lakshmana were walking in the forest, the latter following the former with Sita in between, Sita was hiding Rama from Lakshmana's view, however close they were to one another. So also, says the Master, though the Lord is nearer to man than anything else, man cannot see Him because of egotism.

As long as egotism is not liquidated, not only is Self-knowledge and liberation impossible for man, but he becomes subject to endless trou-

bles. Look at the calf, says the Master humorously, and the troubles that come upon it through egotism. As soon as it is born it cries 'Ham-hai' 'Ham-hai'—'I am', 'I am'. The result of its egotism is that, when it is grown up, if it is an ox, it is yoked to the plough to drag carts full of heavy load; if a cow, it is kept tied to a post and is sometimes even killed and eaten. But in spite of all this punishment, the animal does not lose its egotism; for drums that are made of its hide give out the same sound 'Ham' or 'I'. The creature does not learn humility until the cotton-carder makes strings for his bow with its entrails; for only then does the animal's intestines sing out 'Tu hai'—'Thou art'. The 'I' must cease, giving place to 'Thou'; and this is not achieved until man becomes spiritually awakened.

But egotism is very hard to conquer. It obstinately sticks on to man as the odour of garlic juice to a cup that contained it. Like the Peepul tree it sprouts forth even if it is cut down. The only condition under which it disappears completely is the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi; but even for one who has had this experience, a vestige of it remains, just as a piece of burnt rope retains its form. Being but an appearance, egotism reduced to that state is incapable of any harm, even as the burnt rope cannot bind anything. Though the ego, the root of Maya, is

thus overcome only in the perfection of Knowledge, one can, however, convert it into a factor helpful to spiritual life if the ego is made to centre in God. Says the Master: If you cannot drive off this feeling of I, then let it remain as the 'servant I'. There is not much fear from the ego that centres round the thought, "I am the servant of God; I am His devotee." Sweets bring about dyspepsia, but not sugar candy which is an exception. The 'servant I', the 'I' of a devotee, and the 'I' of a child—each of these is like a line drawn with a stick on the surface of water. The Master calls this type of ego as the 'ripe ego'. It is a force that takes one towards God and is an expression of Vidya Maya.

II

As contrasted with this modified aspect of egotism, there is the crude aspect of it, namely, the 'I' that binds. This is the power of Avidya Maya. The Master calls it the 'un-ripe I' or the 'mischievous I'. Its province includes everything that makes a man worldly-minded and takes him away from God.

There are several sayings of the Master describing the characteristics and the mentality of such men in striking metaphors. The worldly-minded men, he says, are like pigeons. For one can see clearly, while talking with them, how their mind is stuffed with all kinds of low thoughts and desires just as the crop of a pigeon is with grain. As the curly hair cannot be straightened, however much one may try, they cannot be made easily upright and pure. In spite of the worst sufferings of the world, they do not 'wake up' and re-

cognise the true nature of worldly enjoyments even as the camel, being so fond of the prickly bush and the nettle, does not cease browsing on them though it makes its mouth bleed. Even if perchance they come to see that there is nothing substantial in the world, that it is all skin and stone like sour-sop (Amrah fruit), yet they cannot set their heart upon God. Their condition is like that of the snake that has caught hold of a mole which it can neither swallow nor throw out.

According to the intensity of their worldly attachments, the Master puts them into two classes—those who are wholly world-bound, and those whose worldliness is of lesser intensity. The former are like worms that perpetually live in filth and die there with no idea of anything better. If any one should take the worm out of its filthy habitation and place it on a lotus, it would soon die, unable to stand the sweet fragrance of the flower. So this type of men too cannot even for a moment live outside the dirty atmosphere of worldly thoughts and desires. They are best known by their antipathy to whatever savours of religion. Not only do they dislike to hear of God or the chanting of his 'name', but even dissuade others from listening to them. They scoff at prayers, and mock at religious societies and pious men. As water cannot soak the granite, or a nail cannot pierce it, so are they impervious to all religious sentiments.

The second type, that is to say, those whose worldliness is of less intensity, are like the fly, which sits now on filth and now on sugar. They get occasionally a momentary taste of Divine Love, but their natural hank-

ering for filth soon brings them back to the dung-hill of worldliness. They resemble the spring cushion which sinks down when pressed by the weight of one sitting on it but resumes its position when the weight is removed. They are full of religious sentiments so long as they hear religious talk or are in the company of pious men, but as soon as they enter the routine of their daily life, they forget all those high and noble thoughts and become as impure as before. These people, although they believe that they have spent a whole life in devotion, remain practically in the same state in which they were. If a field is full of big rat-holes, the farmer will find no water in it even though he might be watering it for a whole day. So too in the case of the worldly-minded men. They may pray daily and perform spiritual practices; but their whole devotion runs to waste through the rat-holes of sensual desires and ambitions they secretly cherish in their hearts.

III

Such in brief is the picture that the Master presents to us of the state of bondage and of the mind in which the 'mischievous I', the basic stuff of Avidya Maya, is the dominating factor. A study of the Master's sayings, however, shows us that apart from these generalisations, he offers us an analysis of the principal channels through which the 'mischievous I' expresses itself; or rather, he disentangles the different cords that go to make this bondage of worldliness. These are mainly two, the first being pride and vanity, and the second attachment to what the Master calls 'woman and gold' or lust and greed.

We shall consider here the Master's statements with regard to the first of these.

Vanity and pride in all their ramifications, according to the Master, form the strongest chain by which Maya has bound man. What a serious obstacle it presents, is made plain by the Master thus: 'The rain-water never stands on high ground, but runs down to the lowest level. So also the mercy of God remains in the hearts of the lowly, but drains off from those of the vain and the proud. To become great, he insisted, one must be humble. The nest of the sky-lark is built on the earth below, but it soars high up in the sky. If you wish to thread a needle, make the thread pointed and remove all protruding fibres. Similarly if you wish to concentrate your mind and set your heart on God, be meek and humble and poor in spirit, and remove all the spreading filaments of desires.

The Master, however, is very particular to warn aspirants that humility should never be mistaken for a shameless and cringing disposition or want of certain toughness in spirit. For he says: A true man (Manush) is only he who is a Man-hush (which in his colloquial speech meant one endowed with a sense of self-respect). Others are only men in name. One must have within the true mettle of a man, if one wishes to be successful in life. There are, however, many who have no grit in them—who are like popped rice soaked in milk, soft and cringing! They have no strength within; no capacity for sustained effort; no power of will. They are the failures of life. See how peasants select good oxen from a herd of all kinds. The peasant mere-

ly touches the tail of the animal, and the effect is very striking. Those that have no mettle in them would offer no resistance, but lie down on the ground as if they are going to sleep. But those that have mettle would jump about, as if in protest against the liberty taken with them. True men are like that. And again he would say, "No pride is pride that expresses the glory of the soul. No humility is humility that humiliates the self."

While the Master discourages pride and vanity in every form, he makes special mention of three forms of it—of the saint, of the scholar and of the preacher. A study of these three types would make one think that according to the Master's view the higher the field of mental attainment the stronger becomes the hold of vanity.

Referring to the vanity of the saint he says: The vanity of all others may gradually die out; but the vanity of a saint with regard to his sainthood is hard indeed to wear away. With regard to men who pride in their book-knowledge, the Master is particularly harsh. Knowledge of God comes not, he says, to a person who is proud of his learning or wealth. You may say to such a person: "There is a holy man in a certain place. Do you like to go and see him?" He is sure to put forward excuses and say that he cannot come. He thinks he is too big a person to pay a visit to such a holy man. This kind of pride is born of ignorance. It is a sign of bondage. Speaking of a man who was puffed up with this kind of pride, he says: "I had a conversation on God with a certain person. He said, 'Oh, I know all

these.' I said to him, 'Does one who had been to Delhi go about boasting of it? Does a gentleman ever tell us that he is a gentleman?'"

It is the conceit of this type of book-learned men that the Master criticises when he says that Grantha (book) does not always mean 'holy scriptures'; often it comes to mean a 'Granthi' or a knot. For his idea is this: If a man does not read sacred literature with an intense desire to know the Truth, renouncing all vanity, the mere reading of it only gives rise to pedantry, presumption and egotism, which would be an encumbrance on his mind like so many knots. On minds that are thus puffed up with vanity prayer and contemplation produce no effect, like water poured into ashes.

This attitude of the Master has made many think that he is an anti-intellectualist; and also one often finds dull intellects and lazy minds quoting his precious sayings as a justification of their weakness and lethargy. This, however, is a wilful misinterpretation. For it is true that between a heartfelt spiritual yearning and sheer intellectual pursuit, the Master certainly prefers the former; but there is no doubt that between idleness and intellectual pursuit, his preference is for the latter. If an intense yearning for God dawns in the heart of man, he naturally attaches little value to intellectual pursuits; but for one without it, and is full of attachment for one's body and its comforts and all other worldly interests, it is the summit of folly and vanity to decry intellectualism. For if the conceit of learning is only a sign of ignorance, the conceit of intellectual inertia is nothing short of

a glorification of that fundamental defect. It is a sheer perversion of the Master's teachings to say that he encourages any such glorification.

In fact, what the Master wants of spiritual aspirants is to have a clear and balanced idea regarding the place of book-learning in spiritual life. Sacred books, says the Master, only point out the way to God. A person receives a letter from his village home, asking him to send certain things to a kinsman. Until he has read through the letter and understood its contents, he attaches importance to the letter, and not after that. So too the books show the way to godly life; one has to draw inspiration from them, and then reduce that inspiration into realisation—into part and parcel of one's own life. But if in place of doing this, a man makes a fetish of his knowledge of sacred lore and clings to it as the be-all of life, he is foolish like the man who goes to a mango orchard, and instead of eating the mangoes, engages himself in counting the number of trees and fruits in the orchard and computing their total cost. This is an important lesson which the Master drives home again and again to the minds of all spiritual aspirants.

And according to him, this, and whatever other danger there is in book-learning, arise from the failure of man to cultivate discrimination and dispassion side by side with learning. Without these, the mere theoretical understanding of the unity of Brahman and the unreality of the world would not help one to withstand the temptations of life, even as crying, "There is no thorn, no thorn," would not in the least assu-

age the smarting pain caused by the thorn that has entered into one's flesh. By way of illustrating the dangers of this type of scholarship, the Master cites a story from his own life: "Once a Sadhu came to the Panchavati. He used to talk much on Vedanta before others. One day I heard that he had illicit connection with a certain woman. After a while, when I went that side, I found him sitting there, and said, 'You talk so glibly of Vedanta; but what is all this they talk about you?' 'What of that', he replied, 'I shall show you there is no harm in it. If the whole world is unreal at all times, how can my fall alone be real?' I said in utter disgust, 'I spit on such knowledge of Vedanta. It is not real Knowledge, but a mere sham, falsely professed by the worldly-minded, by wisacres with gross worldly attachments.'" Scholars of this type who speak of high philosophy, but do not make their learning a basis for the practice of discrimination and dispassion, the Master compares to vultures that fly high up in the air, but always keep their eyes on the rotting carcass below.

Thus it is the absence of discrimination and dispassion in the scholar, together with his conceit, that the Master condemns, not his scholarship. And conceit, whether it is of the scholar or of the ascetic, is equally bad and a sign of ignorance.

Another aspect of bondage, which the Master terms 'woman and gold', by which he means lust and greed, requires separate treatment. We shall deal with it in the next instalment.

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

By A Devotee

[Swami Shivananda, otherwise known as Mahapurshji Maharaj, was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In his life time he had travelled extensively all over India, and was responsible for quickening the spiritual life of innumerable men. These conversations are pages from the diaries of his disciples, and contain many of the precious instructions imparted by him to spiritual aspirants.]

It was Sunday at about 9 a.m. Mahapurushji was seated on the bed in his room. Many of the devotees had come and he was engaged in conversation with them on various spiritual topics. A devotee who was a little inquisitive asked Mahapurushji, "Maharaj, what is your age?"

Mahapurushji: Are you asking about the age of this body? I do not know that exactly. I think it may be seventy or seventy-two years.

Devotee: In that case, it is almost three times our age.

Mahapurushji: It may be. Why three times only? I exist eternally. This soul is beginningless, infinite, eternal and immortal; it is not subject to old age. This pure, all-knowing and free Divine spirit exists in all beings. And this division into periods of ten, twenty, fifty, hundred, two hundred etc., is all due to Maya. He exists at all times, ever the same, the true, the eternal Being. This world is deceptive, and all our trouble begins with the idea that this illusory and transitory world is real. Thinking that water is really there in the mirage, the deer falls jumping into it. From a distance it appears like a vast expanse of water with waves on the surface. Deluded by it, the deer in expectation of getting water

runs towards the mirage, only to die of thirst and disappointment. Taking this illusory world as real, man likewise is only tormented to death by various troubles. Even by mistake they do not consider once that one day they will have to leave this world. They want to make permanent arrangements—a durable house with brick-built rooms and strong doors. But, my boy, however much you may try to make things permanent, how long, after all, would they last?

Pointing to an old gentleman present there the Swami said: "Now please go and wash your hands and feet and sit down for a while in the shrine room. We have established Kailas in our shrine room; we have Vaikuntha there. There we see the Master, the Holy Mother, Swamiji, Swami Brahmananda, Swami Premananda, Swami Yogananda and others, all are there. Whenever I go to the shrine room I feel as if I have entered Kailas. Now and then I go in and sit down there—ah, what a bliss! The heart becomes filled with bliss."

Addressing a Sannyasin the Swami asked, "When do you go to the shrine?"

Sannyasin: Between 9 and 10 in the morning and in the evening.

Mahapurushji: Don't you go to the shrine early in the morning ?

Sannyasin: No, Maharaj, in the early morning I meditate seated on my bed.

Mahapurushji: Why do you seat yourself on the bed? Getting up in the morning you should finish your ablutions in as short a time as possible and go to the shrine to meditate. Why should you take your seat on the bed ? That is not good. If there is no other suitable place available elsewhere, then it is a different thing. You may under the circumstances take your seat on your bed. When you sit on your bed, you naturally will feel lazy and inclined to sleep. I have a good deal of experience of this. The bed and the pillows force you, as it were, to lie down. If not impossible, I never sit for meditation on my bed. When I find in the morning that the shrine has not been opened, I sit for a while on the bed. and as soon as the shrine is opened, I straight go there. It is a delightful thing and it is the best time for meditation. There is perfect calmness all around, the whole nature is tranquil and the mind becomes meditative with a little exertion. Whatever might be the hour of my retirement to bed, I wake up from sleep at 3 a.m. I have seen that our Master could by no means sleep after 3 a.m. His sleep was usually very short ; it was quite sufficient for him if he had one or two hours' sleep. On getting up from bed he used to take the Name of the Lord. Sometimes he would repeat the Pranava, at other times

the Name of the Mother with clapping of hands. He also was used to taking the Name of the Lord walking about. He would wake up those of us who were staying in his room saying, "well, have you got up ? Get up and take the Name of the Lord." He would then go to everyone and wake each one up. All the while he would be continually singing the Name of the Lord as if he were intoxicated with it. Sometimes, while taking the Name of the Lord, he would go out into the side verandah, stark naked like a child and quite unconscious of external things. On some days, he would begin Kirtanam to the accompaniment of drum and cymbals. We would also join in that. Very often he would sing the Name of the Lord and at intervals himself introduce some happy phrase impromptu while singing the song ; at times he would dance in a self-absorbed mood. Ah, what a charming dance! He would be a different man then ; he could not be recognised at all! Alas, it is impossible to give expression to those divine feelings. His voice was extremely sweet. I have never heard any other human voice so sweet. It would go on, in this strain, till late in the morning. Every one would become God-intoxicated. His Name and Name alone would be audible, as if it were the Vaikuntha, the abode of Vishnu. In what a blissful atmosphere we spent our days with him!

Thus reminded of the Master, Mahapurushji became completely absorbed in his thoughts and it seemed he lost the capacity of speech.

THE ONE AND THE MANY

By Dr. Nalini Kanta Brahma, M.A., P.R.S., Ph.D.

[Dr. Brahma is a distinguished professor of the Presidency College, Calcutta, and the author of the 'History of Hindu Philosophic Sadhana'. In the ensuing brief article he gives a clear and reasoned exposition of the Advaita doctrine of Mithyatva or the unreality of the world—a doctrine often misunderstood and unjustly criticised.]

IT IS generally believed that the Vedantic system of thought explained by Sankaracharya denies the existence of the manifold things of the universe. Brahman is real and the world is unreal ("*Brahma satyam jagan mithya*") is taken to be the substance of the Vedantic teaching not only by those who are supposed to be acquainted with the Vedantic texts, but even by ordinary men. The charge that the Vedanta is unpractical and that it is not based on concrete experience is not a little due to the impression that it preaches the illusoriness of the world. The spirit in which the esoteric doctrine of the non-fundamentality of the universe and the ultimate reality of the Absolute has been held has very often eluded the grasp of the average intellect uninitiated into the technique of the sublime philosophy of the Vedanta and has consequently been misunderstood and misrepresented.

The world of our everyday experience is as real to the Vedantist as it is to every one of us. The Vedantist also drinks water when he is thirsty, takes food when he is hungry, and takes the help of fire for heating purposes. The distinction between fire and water is not a bit less pronounced to the Vedantist than to the commonsense man. The Jivanmukta or the Tattvajnanin, i.e., one who has attained perfect knowledge, does not

swallow fire to quench his thirst or apply water for heating things. Nothing is more absurd than to suppose that the Jnanin or the liberated, in consequence of his perfect knowledge and identity with the Absolute, is liable to confuse between the nature and function of fire and water. God is omniscient and His omniscience is never clouded. He could never have been the creator of this orderly universe of variety and multiplicity, if His knowledge presupposed ignorance or neglect of the distinctions of the things of the world. The world with all the minutest distinctions of its contents is ever present to the consciousness of the Almighty who is its creator as well as its sustainer. God is the ideal Jnanin, and if the manifold universe is presented to his consciousness and offers no hindrance to His omniscience, it will be illogical to suppose that the Jivanmukta or the person who becomes a Jnanin and attains liberation while holding this corporeal frame, will not be able to deal with this universe.

The Vedanta does not deny the empirical reality of the universe and does not differ in this respect from other systems of thought which confine themselves to the discussion of empirical reality and admit the reality of the world. The Vedanta is not in agreement, however, with

the thinkers who hold the fundamentality of the universe. That experience alone is real which is never contradicted. All that appears is not real. An experience that is contradicted by another, which establishes itself more steadily than the former, is only an appearance. But an experience which is not thus contradicted by any other experience and which establishes itself as higher than all previous experiences by being able to explain them, is to be regarded as fundamental and real. This is the distinction between the real and the unreal. The experiences of the things of this universe are not ultimate. An experience is taken as real for a certain period of time, but later it is contradicted by another experience. This process applies to all the things of this universe and also to the universe as a whole. The Absolute or Brahman alone is an experience which is never contradicted. While the experience of the world is transcended by the experience of the Absolute, the experience of the Absolute is not transcended by the experience of the world. It is because of this that the Absolute or Brahman is declared as real, while the world is declared to be unreal or false (Mithya). It is to be understood that the Absolute *transcends* the world, and is not *contradictory* or *opposed* to it. If the experience of the Absolute is merely opposed to the experience of the world, if the two are opposites or contradictories, then there is no means of establishing the superiority of the one over the other. Contradictories or opposites are on the same level. If the one is true, the other is not true.

But how are we to find out which is true? Mere opposition is not enough to decide the question. Dreams are opposed to experiences of waking life; experiences in Samadhi State are opposed to experiences of ordinary consciousness. Is it possible to say, merely from the fact of opposition, that dreams are unreal being opposed to experiences of waking life, but experiences of the Samadhi State are real? Both dreams and experiences of the Samadhi State are opposed to ordinary waking consciousness. Is there any reason to deny reality to one and grant it to another? There must be something in the experiences themselves which establish their superiority over the experiences they are opposed to. In fact, it is not so much an opposition as a transcendence. The higher experience *transcends* the lower inasmuch as the latter does not fall outside of the former to form an antithesis. If the world (Jagat) is opposed to Brahman as is commonly supposed, then the world will form an antithesis to Brahman, and Brahman will not be Absolute. The reality of the world becomes included in the reality of Brahman. All other lights are lights borrowed from Brahman; and when the reality of Brahman becomes manifest, the world is found to have no reality of its own.

Co-ordinates or complementaries are *both* real; the reality of one of them is on a par with the reality of the other. Brahman and the world are not co-ordinates; they are not reals of the same order. The things of the world are real so long as the reality of the Brahman is not perceived. But as soon as the reality of Brahman is perceived, there is nothing

ing else apart from Brahman. It is the source of all that appeared to be real so long. It is the all-comprehensive reality, and nothing can assert itself by its side. Hence while Brahman is real, the world is unreal. To the ordinary consciousness the world is real; but to the transcendental consciousness it is unreal. We cannot speak of Brahman *and* the world. There is nothing besides Brahman. Brahman means the all-pervading, all-inclusive reality; so there cannot be any world in addition to, or by the side of, Brahman. The world is eternally negated in Brah-

man. Brahman is not an aggregate or a collective unity so that all-inclusiveness will be in opposition to negation. It is the genuine one that is free from all dividedness or *many-ness*. It negates the many, it is not *manyness*. The *manyness* or the nature of multiplicity, distinction and aggregation (Jagat bhava) is not its characteristic. But it is the source of the many. The many do not fall outside of it. This is the genuine characteristic of the One. Negation and inclusion here almost coincide; Transcendence really means both.

YOGIRAJ GAMBHIRNATH OF GORAKHPUR

By Akshaya Kumar Banerjea, M.A.

[Mr. A. K. Banerjea is a professor of the Anandamohan College, Mymensingh. He gives below an eminently readable sketch of the life and teachings of a brilliant and inspiring Yogi whose name is not widely known in these parts.]

I EARLY LIFE

YOGIRAJ Gambhirnath, who was considered a Jivanmukta or perfectly self-realised soul by people who knew him closely, took his abode in the last days of his physical existence in the Gorakhnath Temple of Gorakhpur and breathed his last just twenty-one years ago. He belonged to the well-known Natha-yogi sect, which was organised by the illustrious Yogi-teacher Gorakhnath. Very little is known of his early life. Moved by the inner urge for spiritual self-fulfilment, he left his home and domestic relations in the prime of life and got himself initiated into the life of a Yogi by Baba Gopalnath, the then

Mahant of the Gorakhnath Temple of Gorakhpur. He took the name and appellation which his *Guru* conferred on him, and devoted himself heart and soul to the spiritual self-discipline into which the *Guru* initiated him. He practised renunciation even in his outer conduct so thoroughly that after initiation he never referred to his old name or parentage or birthplace or caste or any event of his home-life. On account of his absolute reticence with regard to the concerns of his past life and our inability to get hold of any reliable person who might have some knowledge about them, his pre-ascetic connections have remained practically unknown to all of us.

Some of the old Sadhus of the monastery said that when this young

man first entered into their fold, they were all deeply impressed and attracted by his tall and robust and majestic physique, his sweet and gentle and modest demeanour, his exceptional gravity and taciturnity attended with a rare warmth of heart and readiness to serve, his stolid unconcernedness about all outward happenings attended with a serene love and affection even for the meanest creatures. He appeared to them to have come from a wealthy family of high social status, and they wondered why such a young man with such resources for comfortable living should get sick of the world and think of adopting the life of a Yogi. Even at that time none of the people around him could prevail upon him to break his silence about who and what he had been in his previous life. Perhaps the Guru alone knew his antecedents, and none else among the Sadhus. They could, however, gather by linking together what now and then transpired, that he was born in a respectable family in some village in Kashmere, that even in his early youth his peace-seeking mind became sick of the surrounding social atmosphere of worldly ambition and sensuous enjoyment, mutual jealousy and hatred and universal restlessness and sorrow, that while afflicted by the great riddle of life and thinking deeply within himself to find a way to permanent peace and rest he fortunately came in close contact with a wandering saint of the Yogi sect and was attracted by his life of calm self-enjoyment and attitude of goodwill towards all, and that under his inspiration he gave up all he had, cut off all domestic ties and started for living the life of a bondless Yogi and

learning the secrets of absolute peace and universal love in practical life.

II

WITH THE GURU

The new initiate obtained from his Guru the name Gambhirnath. Everybody who saw him, whether at the period of his self-discipline or at the period of his self-fulfilment, whether in the hills and jungles enjoying the peace of solitude or in the towns and fairs living in contact with various sorts of admiring men and women—could bear witness to the fact that the name was most appropriate to his character and conduct. The name implies that he was a master (*natha*) of gravity (*gambhira*). He was by natural disposition extraordinarily grave—grave in appearance, grave in bearing, grave in speech, grave in the mode of thought, grave in the play of emotions. Nobody ever found him in a fit of temper or in an agitated mood; nobody ever heard him talking loudly or swiftly; nobody ever noticed any indication of sadness or mournfulness on his face; and nobody ever saw him burst into a loud laughter. A mild and sweet ray of smile almost always radiated from his steady eyes and lips, but at the same time there was an unmistakable sign of unbending inner determination visible on them. He belonged to that type of men who were not to be contented with living the life of a mediocre and leaving the mission of life half-fulfilled.

Having got the initiation he concentrated his entire energy upon the pursuit and realisation of the ideal. His inner moral and spiritual character was already adequately disciplined for passing through the preliminary

stages of Yoga within a short time. The esoteric Yoga-sadhana must be based on the systematic culture of Yama and Niyama, which equip the aspirant with sufficient physical and mental purity, with a thoroughly disciplined body and mind, with a fully developed moral character, with a sincere spirit of truth, non-violence, non-selfishness, benevolence, contentment, dauntless determination for perfectly virtuous life and with an unshakable faith and trust in God. When the young Sadhu Gambhirnath began to practise them systematically in accordance with the instruction of the Guru, it was soon discovered that these cardinal virtues were almost natural to him. He had a well-formed body, a well-disciplined mind and a well-developed character. He appeared to be constitutionally incapable of being violent or untruthful in speech or action and of wilfully inflicting pain even upon any little sensitive creature. He had no sense of self-interest, except moral and spiritual. Of greed of wealth and appetite for sexual pleasure he had very little, and this little also he burnt out by the ever-blazing fire of intense yearning for the realisation of Truth. Unperturbable calmness and quietude in the midst of all kinds of troublesome and disquieting circumstances was the most remarkable feature of his character. His faith in, and devotion to, God was quite spontaneous, and he learnt to worship Him in various Names and forms without at any moment forgetting that through all of them it was the One without a second who manifested Himself. Though he had not much book-learning, his intelligence and common sense were of an extraordi-

nary order, and he could easily pick up what he required to learn from what he heard and read and experienced. Accordingly he passed through the preliminary training within a short period, and became eager to leave the crowded monastery in order to devote himself exclusively to higher spiritual discipline in solitude. Within this brief period he received from his Guru an all-round training in ritualistic worship and the management of the monastery.

III

DISCIPLINARY AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

In accordance with the prescribed rules of the particular sect into which he entered, he then got his ears pierced, wore Kundals (rings) in them and became a full-fledged Kanphat or Darsani-Yogi. This is the last of the three forms of initiation, which a Yogi of this sect has to take. The first consists in taking instruction (Upadesa) and some formulæ (Mantra) for religious discipline. The second consists in the preliminary initiation into the life of renunciation, through which the disciple becomes an Anghor (a homeless mendicant). At this stage a small wooden flute-like pipe is suspended on his breast by means of a garland of silken threads. The pipe is called Nada, which is a symbol for reminding the disciple of, and drawing his attention towards, the Anahata-nada or the uninterrupted uniform sound of Pranava continuously ringing within the Anahata-chakra of the heart. To concentrate the attention on this sound is an important step in Yogic Sadhana. The Pranava is conceived as the manifestation, in the form of a uniform

flow of effortless unbroken sound, of the Infinite Eternal Absolute consciousness or Brahman. Concentration on the sound is a suitable means to the continuous flow of thought on Brahman. Baba Gambhirnath preserved this symbol, even after its necessity was transcended, to the last day of his physical existence, as a token of respect for his Guru and Sampradaya (sect). The last form of initiation is that of Kanphat, of which the outward sign is the wearing of Kundals, which are said to represent the extraordinary powers of spiritual vision (Darsan) developed within.

After having taken all the three forms of initiation and finished his preliminary training in the presence of the Guru, the young Yogi got permission from the Guru to leave the Asram and to devote himself to Sadhana according to his own discretion. The details of his Sadhana, we have got no means of knowing. We have come to know of four important holy places, with which his life as a Sadhaka was principally associated,—namely, Benares, Prayag the bank of the Narmada and the Kapildhara hill of Gaya. In each of these localities he settled for a pretty long period for systematic self-discipline in the higher planes of spiritual culture; and of these again the Kapildhara was chosen at the final stage of his Sadhana for the purpose of being incessantly absorbed in the deepest meditation for a sufficiently long period, so as to bring down the highest truth realised in it and the meditative mood of his psychophysical system into the normal nature of his mundane existence.

He lived the life of a Sadhaka, en-

gaged with undiverted attention in the pursuit of perfect truth and bliss, for about twenty-five years after leaving his Guru's Ashram; and at the Kapildhara, where he spent the last twelve years of this period, he came to the end of his pursuit. What had so long been his Sadhya (the ultimate object of his Sadhana) was now converted into his normal experience, and he was recognised as a Siddhamahapurusa—a perfect saint. He now attained a plane of consciousness in which he could enjoy the bliss of Samadhi in the waking state. He could live in undisturbed communion with the non-dual, changeless, infinite, blissful, Consciousness even while carrying on social intercourse with various orders of people and keeping in touch with the mundane affairs outside. The difference between the inner and the outer, the ideal and the actual, the spiritual and the mundane, appears to have vanished from his truth-realising consciousness. He then went on passing the days and nights in enjoying the ever-blissful phenomenal existence of a Jivanmukta in his solitary refuge on the Kapildhara hill.

IV

SPIRITUAL EXALTATION AND ALTRUISTIC ACTIVITIES

But the God of human destiny had not made him for living such a lonely life. Perhaps He had a plan to present before a certain section of humanity, an ideal mode of life, in which a man could perform all the ordinary troublesome duties of a social being without any disturbance of the calm and blissful state of his inner consciousness. An urgent call came upon him to take charge of his

Guru's Asram. He had already become known to a number of truth-seeking pious men as a perfect saint. The Sadhus and Bhaktas interested in the welfare of the ancient temple and monastery of Goraknath at Gorakhpur approached him and earnestly besought him to return to the Asram and restore it to its ancient moral and spiritual glory. He yielded to the call and calmly assumed the responsibilities of the head of a monastery.

At this stage he ungrudgingly abandoned the long outward habits which naturally grew in his lonely spiritual life and accommodated himself to the requirements of the new circumstances. He adopted the dress and demeanour of a perfect cultured Indian gentleman. The *Kaupin*, which had so long been his sole garment, was now concealed under white Dhoti and Chadar. The matted hair was disentangled and flew over his shoulders. The body was no longer besmeared with ashes. He began to use a cot and a bedding for sitting and lying on. He occupied a dark windowless compartment in one corner of the two-storied building of the Asram. It was his sleeping room, his drawing room, his office room as well as the room for imparting instruction to the truth-seekers.

Almost throughout the day, except two or three hours in the evening, he remained seated on his bed in a state of half trance. From the expression of his eyes and face and limbs it appeared that ninety per cent of his consciousness was functioning (if it could be called functioning at all) in some transcendent supra-mundane region, to which the people around him could have no access, while with

the remaining ten per cent only he was conducting the affairs of the Asram, giving necessary instructions to the people and dealing with all sorts of men. The Sadhus, the householders, the officers of the Math, the tenants of its zamindari, the seekers for spiritual guidance, the seekers of relief from economic distress, the officials of the government, etc., would appear before him and present their cases. He would receive all of them with a gentle ray of smile, which always radiated from his manly and tranquil face and inwardly directed half-open eyes, and listen to them with such perfect silence and apparent indifference that it was difficult to guess whether the words got access to his mind. But just at the appropriate moment he would calmly open his lips and give answers to their questions or solutions to their problems, whether practical or theoretical, mundane or spiritual, in one or two shortest possible sentences. In most cases he would satisfy the people with such simple words as 'yes', 'no', 'all right', 'this would do', 'do this', 'do that', etc.

In spite of this mode of dealing with men and things, the Sadhus and officers of the Asram always felt that their conduct never escaped his notice; and they never ventured to take any important step without his permission. The guests always felt that his heart was warm with affectionate hospitality towards them; the tenants always felt in their heart of hearts that Booda Maharaj (as he was generally addressed by them) was more than a father and mother to them with infinite power and will to cure their ills, and so on. Under his management all the departments of the

Asram were found to be conducted with extraordinary smoothness, and regularity, and a pure spiritual atmosphere could be breathed in all its parts. During the last seven or eight years he accepted a large number of educated truth-seeking Bengalees as his disciples.

The self-enjoying Yogiraj appeared to take particular delight in feeding and helping the poor, the holy and the cultured, and to regard this as one of the principal functions of the Asram. He ordered the celebration of Utsava on particular festive occasion in different seasons of the year; and on all such occasions the distribution of food and clothing and Dakshina to the Sadhus, the pundits and the poor, half-starved men, women and children, constituted an essential part of the Puja of the Deity. He taught that the Sadhus represented the ideal of renunciation for the sake of spiritual perfection of human life, and the Pundits represented the ideal of self-dedication to moral, religious and intellectual culture at the sacrifice of worldly ambitions, in the Hindu society. Individuals, he said, might fall far short of the ideals they represented, but the institutions should not on that account be looked down upon and deprived of patronage and encouragement. With regard to the proper use of the Asram-property Baba Gambhirnath's teaching and conduct indicated that the property of the Deity was really the property of the poor, that the Deity enjoyed the property dedicated to Him through its actual enjoyment by the poor, that the worship of the Deity, in order to be truly fruitful, must be embodied in the service of the poor. His conception of the poor

included, not only the weak, ignorant, and suffering members of the human society, but also the sub-human animals. The service to the cows and other useful domestic animals formed an essential part of his charity work. But even tigers and serpents were charmed by his love and received services from him. He had a tiger in the Asram, which forgot its ferocious nature in his company. He used to keep milk at the places where serpents were known to dwell. He was found to feed rats and ants with his own hands.

Though dwelling in the highest plane of spiritual consciousness, he always encouraged popular religion. The worship of the various gods was regularly performed in the Asram in accordance with Sastric injunctions. The truth-seekers were taught to look upon them as the embodied forms, in which God manifested His glorious powers and His loving and merciful attitude towards His creatures.

V

A FEW OF HIS TEACHINGS

I. Make no distinction among Deities. They are different only in names and forms, but identical in substance. One Absolute Spirit is conceived and worshipped in diverse ways by diverse orders of religious men. Have regard for all sacred Names and Forms, but see the same Spirit in them.

II. Pay homage to all religious systems, but strictly adhere to your own with faith, love and reverence. Forms of discipline may be various, but Religion is essentially one. Develop the true spiritual outlook through the practice of your own religion, and you will experience the unity of all religions.

III. Try to grasp intelligently, by the proper exercise of your reason the eternal spiritual truths taught by the Guru, the

Scriptures and the recognised saints, and regulate all the departments of your practical life in pursuance of them. The entire life ought to be directed towards perfect freedom from bondage, ignorance and sorrow.

IV. Have faith in the spiritual power of the Divine Name obtained from the Guru. Repeat It within your mind and meditate on Its real (not literal) significance as often as you can. Remember that the Name is the living embodiment of the Absolute Spirit. Try to realise the spirit in the Name. Be devoted to the Name, and the Name will bestow all blessings upon you and lead you to perfect bliss.

V. Shake off You, Me and Mine, and surrender yourself wholly to the Lord. You will then find that He has taken the entire charge of you. Pray to Him for nothing except Truth and Love.

VI. Think not of the past, and be no anxious about the future. Do what you sincerely judge to be your present duties, and advance onward with faith, courage and optimism. Remember that the Lord knows and decrees what is best for you.

VII. Be truthful, straightforward and charitable in thought, speech and action.

Don't think and speak about the dark sides of people. Don't hurt their feelings and interests. Try to be serviceable to all, specially to the poor and the world-renouncing truth-seekers. Believe that all services rendered with humility are forms of worship to the all-pervading Divine Spirit.

VIII. Discipline your mind to feel the presence of the Absolute Spirit in all beings and to appreciate His Leela in all human affairs and natural phenomena. The whole world will then be revealed to you as spiritual, sublime, beautiful and blissful.

IX. Try to realise first the essential unity of all men and then of all other creatures as well. But observe that in practical life they, being endowed with divergent types and orders of capacities, dispositions and environments, must have different kinds of duties, functions, responsibilities and ways of approach to the ultimate Ideal of Life.

X. The Bhagavad Gita is the infallible guide for all orders of truth-seekers of all ages and countries and sects. It harmonises the teachings of all scriptures and saints, and is therefore the universal scripture.

THE DIVINE QUEST

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, formerly Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is at present preaching the message of Vedanta in different countries of Central Europe. The following are the notes of his class talks at Wiesbaden, Germany, which will appear as a serial in the *Vedanta Kesari* for sometime. This is the fourth instalment.]

I

RELIGION, whether you like it or not, is only for the chosen few. There can never be any mass religion, however beautiful this ideal may seem to you.

The Bhagavad Gita says that out of thousands of people we find one fortunate soul taking to the spiritual life. But success or no success, let us at least strive with all our heart.

Let us all think we are these blessed few that are chosen, and strive on and on.

In the field of religion also there is a kind of aristocracy, but they are always willing to share their riches with others. Those who are strong, those who have the capacity, only succeed; not the others. There is no place for the weakling in spiritual life. The great aristocrats in the

realm of the Spirit always place what they possess, before others. You can take a horse to the water; you cannot make it drink if it does not want to. This is the meaning of throwing pearls before swine. We must use discrimination and bring the right thing to the right person. Others will not be able to understand it, and are not going to follow it, whatever you may say and do. There are people who have greater capacity and smaller capacity. If milk has been adulterated with water too much, how long shall one have to boil it?

We should look upon it as a great fortune that for some reason or other our mind possesses an attraction for the higher and eternal things, and should see that we steadily and gradually proceed along the higher path, never flagging till we reach the goal. Our spiritual fervour is to be maintained, but we very often run the risk of becoming slack. Thus spiritual striving stops in most people after they have taken to the spiritual life for a certain time. Their minds are too restless and too outgoing to keep this spiritual fervour and intensity up for a very long time and to go on steadily and doggedly with their practices and daily readings and studies. So we should be on our guard. Dogged tenacity is the one thing needed for spiritual life. All progress can only be had through great steadiness and tenacity, never allowing ourselves to flag or to become lukewarm.

II

"He is the only One that is stainless, sinless, changeless and unnameable, and that is pure and Divine. There is no second. Whoever knows

Him, becomes He Himself." But how to know Him, that is the point. He cannot be known in a day, just after a few practices done in a haphazard slovenly way.

"Practise your disciplines and all that; it is quite right, but you must know how to die" (Bengali Proverb).

Let us not die the death of a miserable slave, being slaves to our impulses and senses till the very end of our life, never doing anything. Wordsworth says in his 'Intimations of Immortality':—"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting."

The one task of our life is to assert this potential divinity, to come face to face with the Reality that is. Man easily forgets that his power of comprehension is so very limited. And little knowledge is always most dangerous. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." "The more I learn, the more I find I do not know" (Bengali Proverb).

One God hidden in all things pervades all things, and is the Inner Life of all things. He is the giver of the fruits of Karma. He lives in all things. He is the Soul of all; there is nothing like Him, and He is without any Gunas, being secondless. He is the great wise One. He is the one doer among the many actionless objects.

III

Generally, it is not the Truth that we love, but we just love ourselves in something. We are in love with an idea, because it is our idea, not because it represents the Truth at all.

"God is known to him who really knows Him to be unknown. And He is unknown to him, who thinks He is known" (Kena Upanishad).

To the true and steady devotee the Lord reveals His glory. And the devotee's task is to be in tune with the Divine, with the Infinite. And then the Lord manifests His glory to him. Just as man tries to approach God, God is ever ready to approach man.

If you go on trying to find out the root-cause of things, you find it to be an impossible task. A finer and subtler instrument is needed for that.

"He is without mind, ear, hands, feet, and light. There the worlds are no worlds, the Devas no Devas, the Vedas no Vedas, sacrifices no sacrifices, mother no mother, father no father, daughter-in-law no daughter-in-law, monks no monks; so One, only Brahman, shines as different."

It is really very funny—all this manifestation, including the body, the thoughts and all. There is no sense, at least so it appears to us. What is the reason for the Formless to assume form? It is all without rhyme or reason, nothing but madness. There is no explanation for this diversified and multiform play of Maya in the One, and none has ever been able to explain it in terms of the relative. On the relative plane there is absolutely no explanation, whether you call it God's will as the Christian does, or God's sport or play or Lila as the Hindu does. It can never be explained, but it can be transcended.

THE SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK IN THE WEST—II

(Continued from last issue)

By Gaston De Mengel

[M. Gaston De Mengel contributed a learned article on 'The Traditional Movement in Europe' to the November issue of the *Vedanta Kesari* in 1933. In this, the second issue of the present article, he deals with some of the forces working for spiritual revival in the West.]

V

AS we have already pointed out in "The Traditional Movement in Europe", an increasing number of Westerners are becoming aware that their civilisation, and even their vaunted intellectual culture, have very serious shortcomings, and efforts are being made to find some remedy. Curiously enough, this is most noticeable among the French. Defects are after all, qualities which are exaggerated or out of place, and, as it is said, people have "the qualities of

their defects". Now, the very exaggeration of the individualism of the French saves them from being completely subdued by the predominating state of mind that individualism has brought about in the West. Whereas the Italians are at present too fascinated by the glamour of the new social order which their Duce has give them, the Germans and the English are still too proud of their imagined superiority to have the same extent come to doubt the real value of their civilisation.

And the same may be said of the whites of North America. Yet, even in England, the writings of men like G. K. Chesterton and H. G. Wells, and, in Germany, of men like Oswald Spengler, show which way the wind blows. We shall, however, confine our study of the new spirit to the French, as the clearest example, bearing in mind that the other European nations manifest the same spirit in lesser degree.

In France, then, more than in any other Western country, widespread is the impression that there is "something wrong" with occidental civilisation. But what that "something" is, very few seem to be able to discriminate. As M. René Guénon says: "There are now in the West, a greater number of men than we think, who are beginning to be conscious of what their civilisation lacks; if they are reduced to undefined aspirations and too often fruitless researches, if even they happen to go entirely astray, that is because they are deprived of real data which cannot be replaced, and because there is no organisation that could give them the necessary doctrinal direction." (*La Crise du Monde Moderne*, p. 230). Some are aware that these two last centuries have lost spiritual directives which had been more or less preserved up to the French Revolution. Among them some seek the remedy in the restoration of monarchy; and the royalist movement, called "Action Française" from the name of their foremost paper, which was led by such able writers as Léon Daudet and Charles Maurras, has considerably extended throughout France and her colonies; but though a step in the right direction, which, if successful,

would certainly do much to restore social order, this movement falls short of a truly traditional revival, clinging as it does to the artificial principle of nationality, and imbued as it is with the spirit of the Greco-Latin humanistic culture. Others would go further back, and seek refuge in Celtic tradition; but their efforts are of little avail; for too little remains of this tradition, and the attempts to reconstitute it lead to merely fanciful results. Then there are those who seek remedy in educational reform—a very difficult task, education in France being almost entirely in the hands of the Government, and its functionaries being in large numbers corrupted by communism and atheistic Freemasonry. Apart from that formidable obstacle, the "Education Nouvelle" movement is very limited in numbers, and, despite its pretensions, is powerless to produce a really traditional spirit; for its pedagogics lack the guiding thread of metaphysical principles, being inspired by such purely empirical, experimental and "humanistic" leaders as Edwin Holmes, Dr. Ferrier of Geneva, and Doctor Montessori (all foreign, be it noted). More worthy of attention than all the above is the Catholic movement, because, as René Guénon rightly says: "It would seem that there remains in the West only one organisation possessed of a traditional character and harbouring a doctrine capable of furnishing the appropriate basis for the task in view: it is the Catholic Church." Let us then examine this latter possibility more closely.

Having, under the French kings, and from the time principally of Philippe le Bel (1268—1314), gradu-

ally lost its spiritual influence over those in power, persecuted under the Revolution and reinstated, but reduced to a subordinate position, by the Napoleonic "Concordat", the Catholic Church had sunk to a state of apathy, neglecting its doctrine (despite the adjurations of the Popes and especially of Leo XIII), and loosening its moral discipline. Then came another period of persecution (1880), under the Third Republic, which followed the downfall of the Second Empire and the Franco-German war of 1870, the Combe ministry (1902) going as far as to expel the religious bodies and confiscate the monasteries. This resulted in a much needed reaction; a more earnest spirit arose; discipline was reinforced, and a new impulse was given to the study of the doctrine. After a time, the government relaxed its rigour; monastic bodies came back; schools directed by priests reopened; and a big effort was made (greatly stimulated by the foundation of the Institut Catholique whose diplomas are officially recognised) to spread a better knowledge of the doctrine, mainly through the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, there being even a Thomist Feminine Circle, securing a large attendance (it is significant that in England similar efforts have failed). To-day the Catholic Church in France has so far regained her ground that a French minister, Laval, recently paid an official visit to the Pope at the Vatican, the Papal Nuncio was officially received in great state, and the ecclesiastical dignitaries are taking a more and more prominent part in State ceremonies. Social workers are very active, and thanks to the efforts of Monseigneur Verdier, Archbishop of

Paris, numbers of churches are being built, even in the "red belt" (the communist-ridden suburbs), giving work to large numbers of unemployed, and evoking a new interest for religion among the masses. Pilgrimages are attended by thousands of the faithful (including large sections of workmen), and churches are often full to overflowing; the masculine element, which was negligible a few decades ago, being remarkably important.

But what is the real spiritual worth of this catholic revival? Undoubtedly a new spirit of devotion has been created, and that is something; but what is its extent? And are the *elite* any the nearer to realising the importance of metaphysical principles as a guiding light, and applying them? Though the number of people thus reclaimed is considerable, it is after all but a minority compared with the bulk of the population; and a large majority, while perhaps less inclined to scoff, remain indifferent. And the devotion of most of the faithful can hardly be considered as other than occasional—a permanent devotional state of mind being still, among the laity and perhaps a good number of the secular clergy, a rarity. As Rene Guenon says: ("La Crise du Monde Moderne", pp. 138-140): "If, speaking of the present state of Catholicism, we would understand by this as it is considered by the great majority of its adherents themselves, we should be obliged to acknowledge a more positive action of the modern spirit, if we can use such a term concerning something which is essentially negative...a state of mind...all the more dangerous as it is often quite unconscious of those whom it affects: One can believe oneself to be sincerely

religious without at bottom being so in the least; one can call oneself a 'traditionalist' without having the slightest notion of the true traditional spirit; and this again is a symptom of the mental disorder of our times. The state of mind we are alluding to consists in, so to speak, 'minimising' religion, making it something to be set apart, assigning to it as limited and narrow a place as possible, and allowing it no real influence on the rest of existence by making it a water-tight compartment. Are there to-day many Catholics whose modes of thought and action, in everyday life, are appreciably different from those of their most 'non-religious' contemporaries? It is also an almost complete ignorance of doctrine, and even indifference touching all that concerns it. Many regard religion simply as a matter of 'practice', of habit, not to say routine, and they carefully abstain from trying to understand anything about it, being led to think that it is even useless to understand it, or perhaps thinking that there is nothing to understand in it. Indeed, did one really understand religion, could one afford it so small a place amid one's preoccupation? Doctrine is, thus, in fact forgotten, or reduced almost to nothing, which comes singularly near the Protestant conception because it is the effect of modern tendencies, opposed to all intellectuality. What is to be the most deplored is that the teaching usually given, instead of reacting against that state of mind, favours it, on the contrary by too readily adapting itself to it. One speaks always of morals, hardly ever of doctrine." And this leads us to say that even in such teaching as is given (to after all a small minority)

in such public lectures as of the Institut Catholique, metaphysical ones are practically absent, the bulk of the curriculum being taken up by historical and psychological dissertations, not much differing from those given by lay bodies; and theological matters, when they occur, are expounded on the basis of the declaration of the Church, with next to no attempt to explain them metaphysically. Only those who work for degrees are taught what true metaphysics there is in the scholastic philosophy, viz., ontology and theodicy. What wonder that that so many of the best men who wish to understand, who have a leaning for real knowledge, and who more or less vaguely perceive that no true work, whatsoever be its nature, can be carried on and no solid and lasting results achieved without the guiding light of spiritual principles, turn away from the Catholic Church? And their turning away is too often favoured by the narrow attitude of the Catholics, ever declaring that none have the truth but themselves, this being another deplorable fruit of Western individualism. For such minds as would be drawn to the truths that the doctrines of the Catholic Church contain, and which a real understanding of these doctrines disclose, are apt to discern that other traditional forms also contain the same truths, some of them yet more completely. Unfortunately, to quote Guenon again: "If the deposit of tradition (in Catholicism) has remained intact, it is doubtful if its profound sense is still effectively understood, even by the best few, whose existence would, doubtless, be manifested by an action or rather an influence which, in fact, we can no-

where detect." ("La Crise du Monde Moderne", p. 137). "Where are, even in Catholicism, the men who know the inner sense of the doctrine which externally they profess, who are not content with believing more or less superficially, and more through sentiment than intelligence, but who 'know' really the truth of the religious tradition they regard as theirs? We fain would have the proof that at least a few such exist; for that would be, for the West, the greatest and perhaps the only hope of salvation. But we must confess that up till now, we have not met any. Must we suppose that, like certain Oriental sages, they remain hidden in an almost inaccessible retreat, or must one definitely give up this last hope? The West was Christian in the Middle Ages, but is so no more; and if it be said that it can again become Christian none can wish it more than ourselves; and may this come about sooner than we are led to think from what we all see about us; but let there be no mistake, that day will mark the end of the modern world." ("La Crise du Monde Moderne").

As Guenon says elsewhere, a form such as that of the Catholic Church is the one suited to the Occidental temperament—an Oriental form would be unsuitable to the immense majority of Westerners, and if such a form had to be imposed, in default of any other, upon Westerners, it would be as a last resource, to save the West from utter ruin. Men as a whole need form, but its mode is a matter of temperament. Some, of course, a very few, rise above form, and a sprinkling of such are to be met with in France: individualistic reaction against the extremes of in-

dividualism has thrown them more or less completely out of all individualism; they are too keenly alive to the underlying unity of truth in all really orthodox traditional forms to be able to adopt any exclusively. Among such are to be found some of those who have been rebutted by the narrowness and lack of understanding of Catholics, the others are either wandering helplessly, or have frankly adopted an Oriental form. These latter, together with a small minority of the "outside form" (Ativarna, elite), are often capable of doing pioneer work to illumine, in the light of the living traditions of the East, the orthodox, but obscured, traditions still extant in the West; and in these we include, besides the Catholic doctrine, the symbolism of Freemasonry and similar bodies. By the working of the law of subtle affinities, such people are apt to meet and group themselves more or less coherently, and thus create a movement which might possibly succeed in restoring the traditional spirit in the West, even did the Catholic Church persevere in its obscurity and individualistic arrogance, finally to disappear. Such groups must be carefully distinguished from associations organised almost as modern scientific and other societies, or as "orders" more or less fanciful, often with high-sounding names, which come before the public, claiming to represent, perpetuate or renovate tradition or some ancient organisation harbouring it, but, in reality, imbued with the modern anti-traditional spirit, without any true knowledge, or with a fragmentary and patch-work knowledge deformed by modern scientific concepts and a love of vulgarisation,

and often buried under floods of literature or sham ceremonial. Associations of that kind had already come into being in the second half of the last century, under the impulse of men like Papus (Dr. Gerard Encausse), Josephin Peladan and Stanislas de Guaita. These men, at any rate, especially the last, were earnest workers with a good deal more knowledge than leaders of similar pretensions nowadays. At the present time none of those associations in France are of much importance as regards either worth, numbers or influence; but some of them are dangerous inasmuch as they conceal secret groups of social or other magic, or else their more or less conscious instruments—and in the midst of those groups of magic are to be found a few men with real practical knowledge, of an empirical sort mostly, but none the less efficacious. In U.S.A., pseudo spiritual associations abound. Too often they are but money-making concerns trading on vanity and a childish love of novelty and mystery. The country of Uncle Sam is far removed from all true spirituality, and is that of a people enslaved by machinery and crude materialism, as Georges Duhamal, in his "Scenes de la Vie Future", has so well shown; and a friend of mine, who recently visited the States, tells me that Duhamal has, if anything, understated the true state of affairs, and considered the people there as wallowing in base materialism.

Those groups constituting of men having real metaphysical understanding and a sound knowledge of tradition in one or more of its forms, and working disinterestedly for the renewal of the traditional spirit, do

not seek to form themselves into societies, or to come before the public. They are content to elicit, by their writings (often under a pseudonym), and in private conversations, as also by their subtle influence, an interest in tradition and in the guiding principles of metaphysics. A good idea of the spirit which moves them may be got from the following extract from the programme of the "Voile d'Isis", a periodical which for some seven years past has become the organ of a group of men such as we have in view: "The numerous letters received at our editorial offices . . . show . . . that our readers . . . are desirous of finding again that primordial Tradition . . . the knowledge of which alone could stop us from that course to the abyss which our modern world has brought about. We wish to make it clear that our subject is the One and Pure Tradition . . . because, as the Apostle says: 'In Him we live, and move, and have our being' and because in Him the men of all lands and times have and have had their being. We shall hearken to what the sages of all times and all climes equally have declared. We will ignore the artificial barriers which certain minds would erect between the branches of one stem; we wish to show that this stem is one and common to all, but we wish also to rid its branches of all the parasitic creepers which are the false principles and sophisms formulated by sectarians." This group of writers is, however, very small, if select; its moving spirit is Rene Guenon from whose writings we have so largely quoted. Rene Guenon is one of those very rare Europeans who have truly comprehended Eastern metaphysics,

and everyone who wishes to rightly appreciate Hinduism, should read his two principal works on the subject : "Introduction Generale a l' Etude des Doctrines Hindoues" (Riviere, Paris 1921), and "L'Homme et son Devenir Selon le Vedanta" (Bossard, Paris 1925), the latter of which has been translated into English under the title "Man and his Becoming according to Vedanta" and published by Rider & Co., London.

A very few other small groups of like nature there are. Their work and development are secretly watched, and at times directed, by representatives of initiatory centres, yet fewer than they, and whose function

as regards them ends there; for the necessary material must be produced by the West's own resources. Will these little groups develop sufficiently to leaven the mass? The answer is in the lap of the gods. And will they develop in time to preserve the West from a cataclysm? Truth to tell, we are not at present very sanguine, for since writing our article on "The Traditional Movement in Europe", the then active groups which gave us hope have been more or less disintegrated by subtle and pernicious manœuvring; reduced and weakened, they have relaxed their efforts, their influence proportionately declining. However, let us hope for the best.

(Concluded)

MEDITATIONS

By Anilbaran Roy

[Mr. Anilbaran Roy is a Sadhaka of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, and is a noted exponent of Sri Aurobindo's teachings. In the following meditations he echoes softly the voice of every genuine soul aspiring after the Divine.]

I

ASPIRATION

ASPIRATION is our only Tapasya, aspiration is the only fire we are to keep burning in our heart at all times and under all circumstances. We need light no other fire; we need no other askesis or austerity.

If difficulties insurmountable obstruct us on the path, if the forces of falsehood surround us and lure us with dangerous fascination, we have only to tend our heart's fire assiduously, and all obstacles will vanish, all hostile forces, however powerful, will be conquered.

If we fall even to the lowest depths and all hope seem to disappear; if

there be no one to help us, cheer us and guide us; if we lose all and be forsaken by all; yet, if we can continue our aspiration ceaselessly and sincerely, help will surely come from above, and we shall be raised even from the lowest depths.

If depression and inertia overtake us and we cannot make any progress; if darkness beset us on all sides and we cannot see our way; yet, if we can keep our aspiration alive, and earnestly look up to the Divine Power above, fresh vigour and enthusiasm will soon be infused into us and we shall clearly see the path before us.

Aspiration will awaken what is best in us; aspiration will gather up all

our energies and turn them upward. All dissensions and conflicts in our nature will be merged in a single purpose and devotion, and in response will come from above Grace and Divine love. Aspiration will bring us love, and love will lead us to victory.

Let me be like a flame always burning upward to Thee, Mother; let all my soul be consumed in love to Thee; it is thus that I shall have a new birth in Thy Divine life.

Thoughts and ideas continually seek to enter into my mind from the outside and disturb the flame of my aspiration; bless me, Mother, so that I may resolutely throw away all such disturbing thoughts and keep my mind absolutely pure and clear.

Desires and attachments from the vital world always seek to obscure and extinguish my flame; bless me, Mother, so that I may persistently reject all such low desires and keep my heart absolutely clear and pure.

All sorts of attacks are made on my body in order to weaken the flame of my aspiration; bless me, Mother so that I may defy all such attempts and keep my body hale and hearty for worshipping Thee.

Let unbounded faith feed my flame, and immutable calm and peace prevail all over my being. With Thy blessings, Divine Mother, I shall steadily grow into the Divine life.

II

DIVINE HOPE

My inner being has left the old world behind and has discarded the old ways of life; but in my outer nature interest in the old life still lingers; and thus recur again and again in me old thoughts and desires. How can I completely get rid of them un-

less Thou, Mother, takest possession of me and completely fill me with Thyself?

As soon as old thoughts and ideas enter into my mind, I shall aspire towards thee, Mother, and Thou wilt have to fill my mind with the light of Thy truth.

As soon as desires and passions rise in me, Mother, I shall aspire afterwards Thee, and Thou wilt have to fill my heart with unsurpassable sweetness and delight.

As soon as false and perverted movements appear in me, Mother, I shall aspire after Thee, and Thou wilt have to fill my life with Thy harmony and grace.

In all my imperfections and ignorance, I shall continually look up to Thee. Mother, hoping and aspiring that a day will soon come when Thou wilt take entire possession of myself and make me Divine.

III

SAVING GRACE

The manner in which we waste our time and energy is astounding. Every moment of our life, every particle of our energy, can be harnessed to the cause of the Divine, and they can advance us towards the divine life. We have only to keep up a ceaseless flame of aspiration and earnest call; but through our lethargy and ignorance we constantly allow this flame to be obscured by idle, senseless thoughts and desires, which lead us nowhere, but continually involve us in worry, anxiety and darkness. Turning away from the perennial stream of nectar and sweetness, that is flowing before us, we continually drink from the dirty poisoned pool of the lower life. Such is our ignorance, our

foolishness; such is the inertia and incompetence of our will.

Then, the opportunities Thou hast created for us here, Mother, are so potent, so helpful! Yet through sheer ignorance and inertia we fail to take full advantage of them, though always complaining that we are not making any progress. All this is such a foolish waste!

But the saving grace is that in spite of all our foolishness and incompetence and lethargy, we have been allowed to live under Thy direct influence, inside Thy own divine atmosphere. So there is hope that someday we shall make our surrender perfect, our aspiration ceaseless and pure.

THE SACRED GOSPEL OF SRI VAISHNAVAS

By A. Srinivasachariar, B.A., L.T.

(Continued from the last issue)

[Mr. Srinivasachariar is the joint-editor of the *Ramakrishna Vijayam*, the Tamil organ of the Mission, and a pious Srivaishnava. In this section of his essay he sets forth the meaning and implications of the sacred words of the greatest Srivaishnava text, as revealed by their hoary tradition and practice.]

THIS significance of the Pranava is further elaborated and elucidated by the second word of the Mantra, *Namah*, which literally means "not for me." This word laconically emphasises the idea that the Jiva exists not at all for its own sake. In the words of a famous mystic, "the self is nothing, has nothing and can do nothing," i.e., its being, its belongings and efforts have no value of their own. The full implications of the idea may be summed up in the following declaration of the individual soul: "I am nothing at all without Him, and I have nothing to call my own, myself and my so-called possessions really belonging to God. I have absolutely no means of saving myself except God. Whether He condescends to remove my ills or not, I will seek refuge in Him and none else, as He is the only Protector; and I have no other goal but Him." Such

a statement conveys evidently a triple renunciation on the part of the finite soul in respect of the empirical ego, the means of protection and the end of all human strivings entirely and solely in favour of the Supreme Being. God is thus the source, the means and the end of the soul. The second word in the Mantra points out and eliminates the three-fold obstacles to the realisation of the truths about our own nature, the eternal means and the highest goal. The idea 'for me' destroys our real nature, while its opposite 'not for me' heralds in the dawn of the life of self-realisation. Again, existence for the sake of God includes the existence for the sake of the godly too, since the Lord says in the Gita, "The man of wisdom is my very soul;" and serviceability to God seeks its natural fulfilment and reaches its maximum expansion in serviceability to all the

devotees of God. Of the three categories of reality of Vaishnavism, Ishvara exists entirely for His own self, and matter for everything but itself; but the soul exists both for itself and for others including God—so believe the ignorant ones; but the phrase 'not for me' teaches that the soul ought to exist very much like matter subserving God's purpose alone though conscious of its function as a reflecting entity. Indeed, complete submission to the Divine Will as a means of His satisfaction is, in the case of true devotees of a very exalted type, so complete and far-reaching that even when God at rare moments, out of His own free will and out of infinite loving condescension, seeks to reverse the relationship between God and man and finds delight in serving man as His master, the devotee simply acquiesces instead of resenting the treatment, as did Kuchela (the friend of Sri Krishna) when installed by Sri Krishna on His own throne and served by Him. In short Seshatva should make its existence felt even by its complete non-existence, and should assert itself even by denying itself. Such is the unsurpassed glory of this truth about our real nature that when this is realised by an individual, it confers supreme happiness on him and all sorrows and sins vanish for him immediately; but when this truth is not realised, no amount of rituals, sacrifices or propitiatory ceremonies is of any consequence in liberating man from the sense of sinfulness or sorrow.

The final word, "Narayanaya," (meaning 'to Narayana') implies that the individual soul, which exists not at all for itself, exists in reality

for the Supreme Being, to whom it desires to render all possible kinds of disinterested service. Here it may be doubted as to whether this desire on the part of the individual soul is compatible with the complete renunciation inculcated by the second word 'Namah'. But it is well to remember that this desire is non-self-centred, and besides, service is an indispensable requisite for the essential attribute of the finite soul. An unquenchable thirst for service to God has therefore been the key-note of the lives of all devotees of God; for instance, Saint Nammalwar, the paragon of devotees, exclaims: "At all times, in all places and under all conditions shall we do unceasing, flawless, service to God." The vision of God, or even the contemplation on the auspicious qualities of God with a loving heart, induces in the devotees such an intense relish and an infatuation for service to Him that they yearn thereafter for perpetual service and try to lose themselves in it, and further they truly lament that their life prior to their spiritual awakening was all in vain. Hence the prayer for selfless service is constant, continuous and endless.

The Divine Name, 'Narayana' composed of two words Nara (permanent entities) and Ayana (abode) literally indicates a Being that is the abode of the collections of permanent entities, i.e., a Being endowed with unique qualities wherein the entire universe and its contents abide—and also a Being who abides in those entities. Since matter and soul abide in Him, He is the refuge of all those entities and since He abides in matter and soul, He pervades them all as the Inner Ruler. As

the refuge of souls He is the goal and the means of attainment of the finite souls and is also intimately bound to them by all sorts of relationships such as those of father and son, master and servant, etc. As the Inner Ruler residing within the hearts of all souls, He watches with loving solicitude even those that refuse allegiance to Him, and though unseen by them yet affords protection to them and goads them on to their ultimate goal. The lunatic son disdaining to receive food at the hands of his mother in a fit of anger goes astray, and out of sheer exhaustion stretches himself at night in an out-of-the-way lonely building; but the mother's loving eye pursues him there, and unseen and unrecognised by him in the enveloping darkness she feeds him—similar is the attitude of the Antaryamin or the Inner Controller, God. This unique Divine Name thus reveals His supreme greatness on the one hand and His extreme affability and tenderness on the other hand—the charac-

teristics required for the protection of the individual souls.

Initiation into the Great Mantra is looked upon by pious Vaishnavas as a symbol of the recognition of the eternal marital engagement between God and man. In worldly life a string consisting of two strands and sixteen twists is the recognised badge of a married woman; similarly in life spiritual, the sacred string of the Great Mantra consisting of three strings (words) and eight twists (letters) is an emblem of God's devotee, revealing the truth that He is eternally wedded to Narayana, the sole Master of the Universe, by ties of perpetual service. The Great Mantra as a whole is a declaration of the finite soul that he is the eternal servant of Narayana only, owing allegiance to none else, with a prayer that his ego may be completely annihilated and that he may be blessed with the privilege of performing all kinds of service to Narayana.

(Concluded)

WHAT IS YOGA ?

By Swami Vividishananda

[Swami Vividishananda is the leader of the Vedanta Society of Denver, Colorado. In the following article he lucidly presents the salient facts about Raja Yoga.]

IN the West, the word 'Yoga' has rather a bad name. It has been mistakenly associated with fortune-telling, magic or trickery, and the teachers of Yoga have been looked down upon as charlatans. It is really unfortunate. Mostly it is due to ignorance. Or it may be the reaction of the false teachings of pseudo-Yogis who, not knowing anything of the science of Yoga, go about making so-called demonstra-

tions and exploiting the credulity of the people for the furtherance of their nefarious ends. Yoga has nothing to do with such low things and low types of men.

Literally meaning union, Yoga may, broadly speaking, be defined as any rational or scientific method of attaining spiritual illumination or emancipation. Although there are many such methods, we shall here confine ourselves to a brief considera-

tion of that school of Yoga which is known as Raja Yoga.

Raja Yoga may be termed as higher practical psychology, for it is an exposition of the processes of the mind, the ego and the soul or the self with practical bearing upon the life of man. It unfolds the wheel-work of our mental constitution, telling us how the wheels revolve, what is their nature and what is their mutual relation, and points out highly effective ways and means by which we can attain the Goal. It is both theoretical and practical, and is very deep and subtle, compared to which the psychology of modern times is still in its infancy. It was perfected more than two thousand years ago and has been successfully practised by countless spiritual aspirants all these centuries.

The science of Raja Yoga has both its physiological and mental sides; for it studies the body and the nervous system as well as the mechanism of the mind in all its phases. As distinguished from modern psychology, Raja Yoga does not stop with the study of the conscious and the subconscious mind alone but goes further into a deep and close analysis of that side of our life which is known as the superconscious—the vast realm which remains unexplored and unknown to most human beings. As such, Raja Yoga is unique in its own field and has already attracted the attention of many psychical research schools in Europe and America.

Raja Yoga and, for that matter, all the classical Yogas in India start with an assumption which is taken as an axiomatic truth based upon the superconscious experience of the perfected souls of the past. And this

assumption is: Our present state is a degeneration. We have, on account of ignorance, fallen from that pedestal of supreme blessedness which is synonymous with perfection. We have to go back to that state, and the sooner we do it the better for us. Nothing short of that can give us real peace. We are all potentially Divine. We have within us, in germ, all the attributes we apply to God, namely, truth, goodness, beauty, purity, love, joy, wisdom and freedom. We have to manifest them in life through conscious, systematic efforts and remove the veil which hides our real selves.

The life of an average man, says the Yogi, is full of limitations, physical, mental and spiritual; and where there is limitation there is pain. It is on account of this that real peace or happiness is almost an unknown quantity in this world. Not to speak of the pains of birth, disease, old age and death, the common evils with which life is beset, we have other pains of a hundred and one kind.

So long as we are circumscribed within two planes of consciousness, namely, the conscious and the subconscious, we cannot rise above the limitations and their attendant pains. The conscious and the subconscious touch only the fringe of the vast realm of universal Intelligence—the Divine. So limited and cut off from the Divine is our life that it is not much different from a groping in the dark—it is a state of ignorance. Raja Yoga prescribes different techniques of physical and mental discipline which will help us to rise to the superconscious plane and become perfect. It wants us, by close observation and experiment, and a searching self-ana-

lysis, to discover our real self. Raja Yoga does not envisage any dogma.

The human mind may be classified into five groups, namely, the restless, the dull, the gathering, the concentrated and the supremely poised. The restless and the dull types are abnormal; the gathering type representing that state of the mind in which man tries to gather his thoughts is normal and is characteristic of an average man; the concentrated and the supremely poised types are supernormal; they are peculiar to Yogis—the past-masters in the art of self-control and concentration. Leaving out of account the first two types, which are cases for psychopathic treatment Raja Yoga addresses itself to the task of helping the normal man to rise from the gathering state through concentration to the supremely poised state. When there is the lack of concentration the energies of the mind are dissipated and diffused. It is like a wind-tossed lake full of turbulent water. It may have pearls and precious stones of rare beauty at its bottom, but nobody knows anything about their existence. Similarly we do not know anything about our real selves when our mind is either dull or restless.

Raja Yoga is essentially practical and has four steps, each of which must be followed in order to attain success. The first step, which may be described as its foundation, includes the practice of certain moral virtues and the observance of certain physical and mental disciplines. They are non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, non-receiving of gifts, physical and mental cleanliness, contentment, austerity, scriptural study and self-surrender. Most

of these virtues are enjoined by all the great ethical and religious systems of the world. A man cannot be a Yogi even if he practices concentration for years, if he is morally lax. It would be just like irrigating a field with many rat holes.

The second step includes posture and breathing exercise. We must have a posture in which we are comfortable and can concentrate our attention best. We cannot concentrate the mind very well when we are standing, running or lying down. In India we have developed a wonderful science of postures, meditative and remedial. We are concerned here only with meditative postures and not with remedial ones which aim at correcting certain physical deformities and ailments. An aspirant practising concentration should have a steady posture in which he is seated erect, keeping the head, neck and spine in a straight line, so that the nervous system and the brain can function well with ease. It has been observed that one can think better when the spinal column is held straight.

Breathing exercise is quite a complicated practice. Its object is to quiet the mind by quieting the nerves by regulating the breath. When we breathe rhythmically and deeply our nerves become steady and it helps us to steady our thoughts, which have a tendency to wander.

In order to understand the connection of breathing exercise with the steadying of the mind one must know something about the Yogic doctrine of Prana or energy. According to the science of Yoga the universe is the play of one supreme, all-pervasive, intelligent, energy. We find this energy in Nature as light,

heat, electricity, gravitation or magnetism. Again we find the same energy within ourselves as life-force, nerve-force or thought-force. If we can control the energies within, we can control the energies outside; for every man is a small universe in himself, and the two universes, Nature and Man, are not only interconnected and interdependent but governed by uniform laws. By breathing exercise we control the energy that moves the lungs, which act as an indirect quieting influence upon the mind. So breathing exercise is helpful although not absolutely necessary for concentration. One can have concentration even without breathing exercise. Breathing exercise should be practiced under the guidance of an able teacher, or it may be harmful.

The third step is concentration and meditation, the most important and difficult part of the practice. The human mind naturally has an outgoing tendency. A Yogi practicing concentration restrains the sense organs and the mind, not allowing them to go out, and becomes absorbed in the thought of the Ideal. Gradually he reaches a state of the mind which may be called one-pointedness, and when this one-pointedness is heightened and deepened he attains Samadhi, the mystic experience where the individual soul realises its oneness with the Universal Spirit. Then the personality of the Yogi is flooded with supreme illumination and blessedness and he is freed from all limitations.

This experience though indescribable has been described by Yogis and seers in glowing terms. It is the be-all and end-all of human efforts.

Saints, sages, seers and prophets of different countries must have had partial or complete realisation of this experience when they talk of God-vision, ecstasy, beatific experience or swooning into the Absolute. This experience is not the monopoly of a blessed few, but the birthright of every man. Before we can hope to reach this state we have to fight and conquer our animal propensities and overcome certain great obstacles like doubt, lethargy, the tendency to identify the stage with the goal and attraction for psychic powers.

Raja Yoga considers in detail these psychic powers or phenomena which are a puzzle to modern science and psychology. As a spiritual aspirant dives deeper into his inner being he reaches higher levels of consciousness. Consequently his mind becomes purer and develops certain powers which an ordinary man does not possess. For instance, he may see things happening at a long distance or read the thoughts of people coming to him in picture forms, or heal the sick.

Admitting the fact that most of the cases of psychic phenomena are fakes, we cannot shut our eyes to certain actual occurrences. Such phenomena do take place, and they can be accounted for, if we know the higher laws of Nature which is so vast and stupendous.

Psychic powers are good in so far as they indicate our progress and not more than that. They are great temptations. So they should be ignored and not used; otherwise, we might be side-tracked and fail to reach the Goal. Many a spiritual career has been wrecked by falling easy victims to these powers.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

(OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

तस्याः ज्ञानमेव साधनमित्येके ॥ २८ ॥

तस्याः of that (Parabhakti) ज्ञानम् Knowledge एव alone साधनम् means इति thus एके some People (opine).

28. Some people opine that Knowledge alone is the means to attain it.

Note. Some like Sankara emphasise the function of the intellect in attaining the highest realisation and subordinate other functions to it. In fact all the Darsanas, except perhaps the Purva Mimamsa, promise Mukti only to those who have a clear vision of Truth. Compare also Christ's saying: "Thou shalt know the truth and the truth shall make you free." There is no doubt that spiritual practice must begin naturally with thinking about what we have to attain and knowing the means to attain it. That is the reason why every system of religion insists upon some sort of scriptural study under some teacher. Even for loving God or to practise virtue, some kind of previous thought and knowledge is essential. Thus Walter Hilton, the Christian mystic, says, "When thou goest about to pray first make and frame betwixt thee and God a full purpose and intention, then begin and do as well as thou canst." 'The cloud of unknowing', a Christian treatise on mysticism, says, "Prayer may not goodly be gotten in beginners or proficients, without thinking

coming before." All mediæval Christian theologians and mystics emphasise that steady and methodic thought must precede any spiritual practice. St. Theresa harps on the supreme need for 'recollecting the mind', i.e., collecting the scattered thoughts and concentrating the intellect on the business in hand. This emphasis on the reasoning faculty is surely not out of place, for there are fools who run away with the impression that reason has nothing to do with spiritual realisation and quote as their authority Katha Upanishad II.9: "That realisation is not to be had by mere reasoning", and Brahma Sutra II.1.11: "Because reasoning has no sure basis." The Sruti and the Sutra quoted above only tell us that mere reasoning, independent of the other functions of the mind, and other help got from the experience of others may not lead to the Highest. But surely there is no sense in believing that one should leave one's brain behind, immediately one turns towards God. It is indeed true that all mental powers must be transcended before one realises the Highest. The soul must indeed outstrip its instruments in its flight towards God during the last stages, where it is a 'flight of the Alone to the Alone', as a Christian mystic puts it. But those who are still far from this stage will only be injuring themselves by trying to anticipate this moment. This stage can

never be attained by mere annihilation of intelligence and reason.

Again one's own view of the truth experienced must be coloured by the contents of the mind acquired previously—the apperceiving mass, as the psychologist would call it. Therefore it is always advantageous to have a reasonable idea of God before spiritual realisation. The more worthy and pure our ideas of God, arrived at by a proper use of the intellect, the more pure and worthy and true our experiences will be. But we should take care not to mistake this for mere dry intellectualism. As Narada points out later on in Sutra 74, the aspirant should not take delight in vain argumentations and scholastic disputations for their own sake. The proper place for reason is provided for in spiritual practice by the insistence of Mananam. Manu says that only he knows Dharma and not others, who understands the teachings of the scriptures with the help of reason. The Yogavasistha says that one should discard even the words of Brahma if it is against reason. Bhagavan, after teaching Arjuna the whole of Brahma Vidya, tells him at the end that he should understand it critically and then adopt such of the teachings as seem reasonable. Brihaspati says that in all considerations of Dharma, if reason is not given its proper place, there may be loss of virtue. Jaimini says in 1.3.3. and 1.3.11 & 12 that wherever there is conflict in Sastra, one should remove the conflict by use of reason.

Thus we see how all our great teachers have given the highest place for reason in spiritual practice. But it is one thing to give it its legitimate place in the scheme, and another

thing to say that reason alone is the means of attainment. Therefore some others reject this one-sided view as shown in the next Sutra.

अन्योन्याश्रयत्वमित्येके ॥ २६ ॥

अन्योन्याश्रयत्वम् mutual interdependence इति thus एके others (think).

29. Others think that the various faculties are mutually interdependent.

Note. The mind is a homogeneous entity and cannot be cut up into water-tight compartments. In exercising one function prominently, the others are also unconsciously exercised. One would do well to give exercise to all the functions, because they will be mutually strengthening each other, and the goal will be attained the sooner. Reason by itself is like a man and love is like a woman, says Sri Ramakrishna. The one can go only as far as the drawing room, while the other can enter the inner precincts. Ruysbroeck also says, "Where intellect must stay without, love and will may enter in." In the words of the 'Cloud of Unknowing', "It is the blind intent stretching towards Him, the true lovely will of the heart, which gains the goal." St. Augustine also thinks that man is nothing but his will. William Law says, "The Will makes the beginning, the middle and the end of everything. It is the only workman in nature and everything is its work." The Bible says, "The Kingdom of Heaven is taken by violence." The 'Cloud of Unknowing' says in another place, "By the least longing man is led to be the servant of God, not by faultless deductions of dialectics, but by the mysterious logic of the heart."

Thus if intellect refuses the aid of feeling and will, it remains dry intellectual dogma. If love is unassisted by intellect and will, it may be blind sentimentalism; and if will is not helped by knowledge and love, it remains merely meaningless, aimless activity. In fact it would also seem impossible for each of the functions to work separately in isolation. How can a man know the Highest without putting forth effort to know, and without being prompted by the love of Truth! So also is it possible for anybody to love truly without knowing the object of his love and without exerting himself to serve his beloved? Similarly it is not also possible to exert oneself for somebody without knowing and loving him. Thus all the powers always co-operate with one another.

स्वयं फलरूपतेति ब्रह्मकुमारः ॥ ३० ॥

स्वयंफलरूपता the fact of being one's own fruit इति thus ब्रह्मकुमारः Narada.

30. But Narada says that Spiritual realisation is its own fruit.

Note. To say that it is its own fruit means that it has no cause or that it is not the effect of anything else. The explanation of this is as follows : We have seen that all self-effort in the form of spiritual practice holds good only in the realm of Avidya or Maya. The results of these practices are also within the province of this Maya, i.e., province of causality. These practices cause the destruction of ego or the production of the purity of the heart. But spiritual experience is not mere destruction of the ego or purity of the heart. It is the eternal-

ly perfect nature of the Self revealing itself spontaneously when the necessary conditions are present. The Sadhanas are not causes of this experience, because when the experience takes place one has transcended the law of causation, and it is impossible to relate that absolute state to the Sadhana by the links of cause and effect. Moreover, we have also seen how Sadhanas by themselves are powerless to produce even the conditions necessary for this Self-manifestation without being assisted by the grace of God. As the Self pushes out towards reality, God rushes in on it. If the aspirant takes one step towards God, God takes two steps towards his devotee. Grace is only the theological expression to indicate this inflow of Divine energy, which is the response made by God to human effort. Grace presses in upon us eternally, and merely awaits our voluntary appropriation of it. As Walter Hilton puts it, "Though it be so that prayer is not the cause of grace, nevertheless it is a way or means by which grace freely given comes to the soul."

राजगृहभोजनादिषु तथैव दृश्यत्वात् ॥ ३१ ॥

राजगृहभोजनादिषु in the case of the Prince, home, and dinner तथैव similarly दृश्यत्वात् because it is seen.

31. As it is seen only thus in the case of the prince, home and dinner.

Note. Prince—The allusion is to the well-known story of the prince, who was lost by his father in his childhood, and was taken care of by hermits in the forest. When the boy, who was ignorant of his parentage and considered himself a mere hermit,

heard of his parentage accidentally, nothing new is produced but he is only reminded of an existing fact. So, one is reminded of one's true status when one realises his spiritual goal.

2. *Home*—The reference here is to the experience of the wayfarer who returns home after a long absence. The home continues to be his home even in his absence, but the distance which obstructed his enjoyment is removed when he comes back. The pleasant experiences of his home were beclouded by his long absence, but are again revealed immediately he comes back. Nothing new is produced by his coming back.

3. *Food*—The reference here is to the experience of the hungry man when he has his dinner. The dinner does not produce any new satisfaction, but only removes the disturbance caused by hunger. When the disturbance is removed, the natural satisfaction remains undisturbed.

These illustrations show how the Sadhanas really work. They result only in removing the obstructions to the natural experience of the Self which is eternal and never produced by any effort on the part of man.

न तेन राजा परितोषः क्षुब्धान्तिर्वा ॥ ३२ ॥

न not तेन by that राजा King

परितोषः Satisfaction क्षुब्धान्तिः appeasement of hunger वा or.

32. Not as a result of that does the Prince become Raja, nor the wayfarer derives satisfaction, nor the hungry man feels appeased.

Note. Not as a result of the hearing of the news does the hermit become a prince. He was a prince already, and no status was added unto him by his mere hearing. The wayfarer's satisfaction is also there already, nothing new was added to him by his return. So also the satisfaction of having a healthy body is already there; taking of food does not create anything new, but only removes the disturbance caused by hunger.

तस्मात् तैव ग्राह्या मुमुक्षुभिः ॥ ३३ ॥

तस्मात् therefore सा that एव alone मुमुक्षुभिः by those who are desirous of permanent release ग्राह्या worthy to be accepted as the goal.

33. Therefore only that highest spiritual realisation is worthy of being accepted as the goal by people who are desirous of permanent release from all bondage.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Popular Culture in Karnataka : By Masti Venkatesa Iyengar. Copies can be had of Satya Sadhana Pustaka Bhandara, Fort, Bangalore City. Pp. 103. Price Rs. 2-5-0.

The chapters of this book form the lectures delivered by the author some ten years back under the auspices of the Madras University. Originally delivered

in Kannada, these lectures are now made available to the English-reading public through the book under review.

After giving some account of the general features of the Karnataka country and people in the first chapter, Mr. Iyengar devotes four chapters to consider in some detail the teachings of, and the popular

religious movements associated with, the two great men who have moved the hearts of the Kannada people—Basavanna, the founder of Virasaivism and Purandaradasa, the chief of the Vaishnava devotees and singing psalmists known as the Dasas. Though these two great teachers stood for the different theologies, there was behind them a common spirit of reform working the desire to establish a purer faith among the people, to liberate the masses from priestcraft and superstition, and to bring a personal God and an ethical ideal based on belief in Him, to the life of every man. The author devotes a chapter to the consideration of Ranganatha's popular philosophical work in Kannada, Anubhavamrita, and to the aphorisms of Sarvajna. The folk songs of Karnataka country and the place names and stories current there, are treated in two instructive chapters, and the book concludes with another chapter, giving a critical estimate of the virtues and failings of popular movements in the past and of the as yet unrealised possibilities resulting from the contact with Western civilization. The author has got some severe remarks on the failure of modern English education and its products to do anything for the popular culture, and he is strongly of opinion that any vigorous revival of popular culture is possible only when the gulf separating the classes from the masses is bridged by the rise of great reformers like Basavanna and Purandaradasa who can bring a gospel of faith, courage and hope to the doors of even the commonest of men.

It may be of interest to quote here a passage from Mr. Aiyengar's concluding remarks, giving a brief estimate of what the popular culture in Karnataka has achieved. He says: "Living long together they have learnt to defer to forms of worship different from their own. By long practice, they have learnt that religion is mainly a personal matter. To most of them, the personality of God needs no proof and the truth realised by the Christian saint that God cares for each as if He cared for him only and for all as if they were no more than one, is axiomatic. The old order has inculcated a positive system of morality among them and prescribed social duties and charitable acts

for the public good. It has created efficient machinery for the propagation of knowledge, and for free communication of thought between the high and the low. In social life and religious worship, it has tried to combine the arts and to bring into the commonest life something of the joy that comes by contact with poetry and music, and something of the light that comes from philosophy and meditation. At its best, it has made effective use of the language of the people for the education of the masses and developed a tradition of instruction through symbol and parable that was obviously highly successful."

In conclusion we must say a few words about the outstanding merits of the book in general. It is written in faultless and graceful English of high literary merits. And the general treatment of the subject shows the author's intimate acquaintance with Kannada literature in all its aspects and his penetration into the spirit that inspires it. This has enabled him to intersperse his very informative work with delightful and appropriate quotations in translation. To represent the culture of a country something more than mere scholarship is necessary. That something is an enthusiasm for the culture. Mr. Aiyengar possesses in abundance both these, scholarship and enthusiasm, and the result is this valuable contribution to the study of Indian culture, which may very well serve as a model for those who want to write on the much-neglected movements that have influenced and moulded the lives of the masses in different parts of India.

Silver Jubilee Souvenir: Published by the Mahratta Education Fund, 23, East Mada Street, Mylapore, Madras. Price Rs. 3 per copy.

It is a great pleasure to go through the above volume published by the Mahratta Education Fund on the occasion of its Silver Jubilee celebrations. Apart from the brief history of the M. E. Fund and list of Maharashtrian residents in the city of Madras embodied in the volume, a matter of absorbing interest is the account of the life and achievements of eminent Maharashtrians who have shed lustre on the cultural life of South India. The volume is profusely illustrated with pictures

of many notable personalities, and contains illuminating contribution from a number of distinguished scholars on cultural and historical subjects. We hope it will be a valuable acquisition to every library, public or private, and specially to those engaged in any research work on allied subjects.

Sri Ramakrishna—Les Paroles du Maître (French):

This book is the French translation of the 'Words of the Master'. It is enriched with a preface by Swami Yatiswarananda wherein he brings out the unique character of the work. Compiled as it is by Srimat Swami Brahmananda, who was regarded as a 'Mountain of Spirituality' by his co-disciple, the great Swami Vivekananda, this work is perhaps the most authentic and authoritative edition of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. The translation has been made with the greatest care. As is mentioned in the preface, every phrase and word have been compared with the original and where an expression has no proper French equivalent, the Bengali word is retained, an explanatory note being added, giving its sense and significance. On a comparison with 'Sri Ramakrishna Upadesha', the original, we find that the translation is scrupulously exact and accurate, though we are constrained to observe that no translation can transmit the idyllic simplicity, subdued strength, and the divine air and melody of the original. A few mistakes have however crept in. Thus, on page 30 saying I, 'Bhagavad Gita' should be 'Bhagavata'. On page 106, saying 4, one sentence of the original has been left out and hence the sense is incomplete. The devotion and care of the translation are beyond all praise, and we hope that this will be followed by the translation of the inspired 'Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita' by M.—P. Seshadri Iyer, M.L.

Bhakti Yoga: Raja Yoga: and Commentaires sur les Aphorismes de Patanjali (French):

M. Jean Herbert is to be heartily congratulated for the great labour of love he has begun in a spirit of perfect sympathy and devotion to make available to the French public the immortal works of Swami Vivekananda conveying his universal message. The translation leaves nothing to be

desired. Strict conformity to the original has been the guiding principle, and yet there is not the least bit of the heaviness usual in such works; they have the simplicity, lucidity, force, grace and charm of the original. The preface to the commentaries of Swamiji on the Aphorisms of Patanjali written by Swami Siddheshwarananda is very valuable. It deals briefly and clearly with the date of Patanjali, the way to realisation taught by the Upanishads, the part played by Buddhism in the religious history of India and the contribution of Patanjali in giving a systematic method of practical spirituality. The Swami refers incidentally to the question whether the author of the Sutras is also the celebrated grammarian, the Patanjali of the Mahabhashya, and shows that both these works are spiritual in character. The unique nature of Patanjali's system in Indian thought, the different Bhashyas on the Sutras and the special characteristics of the commentary of Swami Vivekananda which make it eminently useful to the modern age are also treated in an interesting manner. We shall just cite the concluding portion of the preface, "The teachings of Patanjali have a universal application, for they treat of the fundamental elements of human nature; and in the commentaries of Swami Vivekananda we are guided by one who incarnates in his own life the teachings he has explained."—P. S. I.

Sri Aurobindo—Aperçus et Pensées (French):

This is the first work of Sri Aurobindo which appears in book form in French. It contains the fundamental and essential ideas of the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo in a concise and impressive form. The aphorisms are not merely a healthy stimulant for the intellect, but are even more, suggestive thoughts to be meditated upon in silence and realised in practical life. The excellence and accuracy of the translation are beyond question since the work has been done under the constant personal direction of Sri Aurobindo, a master in both the languages. The preface gives a brief and luminous sketch of the life of this 'prince among thinkers' and a short account of the unique nature of his great message. A portrait of Sri Aurobindo taken in 1920

adds to the great value of the book.—
P. S. I.

Gandhi Letters a L' Ashram (French):

These letters to the Ashram were originally written in Guzerati and published later on under the title, 'Vratavichara'. They deal with a good number of very useful and practical subjects such as truth, Ahimsa (non-injury), Brahmacharya, Humility, Swadeshi etc., and are eminently suggestive. To translate these sermons written in the inimitable style of Mahatmaji which has inaugurated a new era in Guzerati literature is no easy task; but M. Jean Herbert has done the very best in the circumstances. It is refreshing to find that a literal translation, which would leave the spirit obscure, has not been attempted. A comparison with the original gives the im-

pression that the translator has not hesitated to expand a phrase or sentence when it is necessary to bring out fully the idea sought to be conveyed. Extracts from the other writings of Mahatmaji on the same topics enhance the value of the book. In a brief preface, the essentially moral character of all the activities of Gandhiji is dwelt upon and a short account of the occasion of the writing of these letters and their nature are given. The photograph forming the frontispiece recalls the memorable meeting at Villeneuve (Switzerland) in December 1930 of Mahatmaji and Romain Rolland.—P. S. I.

The printing and get-up of the above six books are excellent and the price is very cheap.

They may be had at the Bharata Sakti Nilayam, Pondicherry.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The Ramakrishna Mission Calcutta Students' Home, Dum-dum, 24 Parganas.

Report for 1937

This eminent educational institution has been in existence for the last nineteen years. The year under review is marked by the following noteworthy events. A new temple and prayer-hall has been opened; the Birth-day Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with many interesting items; the foundation stone was laid for another two-storied building to provide additional accommodation for students, which is expected to be completed in a very short time.

The novel feature of the home is that it aims to revive the spirit of our ancient educational ideals developed by the Rishis in their sylvan retreats, and as such its place in the scheme of national welfare is highly significant. In fact it has been successful for the last nineteen years in turning out batches of young men of thorough university education with a laudable training in meditative habits and ideals of holiness and self-dedication. Brilliant college students of poor financial circumstances, coming from different parts of Bengal find here all manner of financial

help for their college education and a congenial home for self-culture, and they leave the Home as worthy citizens with the graces of their head, hand and heart well-developed. The Home is a recognised Hostel for college students under the Calcutta University, and some eminent visitors, Indians and Europeans, have recorded their unstinted praise for the aims, ideals and working of the institution. A review of the activities of the Home follows:

Roll. At the end of the year there were 40 college students of whom 25 were free boarders, 10 concession holders and 5 paying boarders.

University Education. Nine free students sat for different university examinations. Of these, one stood first in first class for M.Sc. in Chemistry; one passed P.Sc., M.B.; and the remaining seven passed the Intermediate Examination in the first division.

Home training. Religious classes were held for the inmates by monks at regular intervals. Several religious festivals including Kali-puja and Saraswati-puja were held to intensify the spiritual aspiration of the students. A monthly MSS. magazine was conducted by the students. Saturday classes for discussion of socio-religious

topics were held throughout the year. Practical training included performance of all household duties (except cooking) and rearing of kitchen gardens and flower-beds with satisfactory yields. In this connection it may be mentioned that the management is preparing a scheme of vocational training, to be launched upon as soon as funds for starting the work will be available.

The total receipts during the year in all the funds, together with the previous year's balance, came to Rs. 22,627-15-9; the total disbursements amounted to Rs. 16,990-9-0, leaving a balance of Rs. 5637-6-9, of which Rs. 5186-6-3 constitute the Permanent fund.

Immediate need is felt for the construction of a Library building, a medical ward and a few cottages for the workers—the essential needs of an educational institution.

The management requires also funds for the maintenance of students, and for giving shape to that comprehensive scheme of vocational training the importance of which cannot be gainsaid when Wardha Educational programme looms so large before the public. Anyone meeting the entire cost of one complete structure or that of maintaining one or more students by an *adequate endowment fund* may dedicate the same to the memory of his dear departed relatives.

We appeal to all gifted with ample wealth and a generous heart to contribute their best for ensuring the full growth and development of such an excellent educational experiment. All contributions, however small, will be thankfully received by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Po. Belur Math, Howrah or the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Romesh Mitter Road, Po. Dum-dum, 24 Parganas, Bengal.

Ramakrishna Mission Flood Relief Work *Appeal for Funds*

We have already informed the public of our having begun relief work last

month in the Gopalganj sub-division of the Faridpur District. Our workers at Gopalganj inform us that the distress is as acute as ever. The water is still rising. Thousands of poor people who have been rendered homeless and foodless are undergoing the severest trials. The floods have invaded even the compounds of many homes, and it is one vast sheet of water all around. There is not a trace of the paddy which was completely destroyed before it was ripe. The labourers and cultivators have not even a single morsel of food. The major part of the paddy which was to have ripened in October, has been mostly infested with insects which feed on the ears. Even those who own 10 Bighas of land are in want of food. The afflicted poor live on the stalks of water-lilies, palmyra fruits or jute leaves boiled in water. The condition of the cattle is very pitiable. There is absolutely no fodder for them. They have to stand in water which surrounds them on all sides. The peasants feed them with water hyacinth to keep them alive, but where this is not available, the cattle are beginning to die.

Up to 15th August 75 mds. 6 srs. of rice was distributed from the Silna and Nijra centres among 2,030 recipients belonging to 30 villages. The quantity of rice required per week will be 100 mds. since more villages will have to be taken up and a larger number of recipients enrolled in the villages within the present area.

For the carrying on of the relief work funds are most urgently needed. Even on a modest computation we shall require Rs. 500 per week for this area alone. The success of the work depends entirely on the sympathy and co-operation of the generous public. We appeal to our kind-hearted countrymen to come to the rescue of thousands of their afflicted sisters and brothers in their hour of dire peril. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, P.O. Howrah Dt.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXV]

OCTOBER, 1938

[No. 6

HINDU ETHICS

तापत्रयेणाभिहतं यदेतदखिलं जगत् । तदा शोच्येषु भूतेषु द्वेषं प्राज्ञः करोति कः ॥
अथ भद्राणि भूतानि हीनशक्तिरहं परं । मुदं तदापिकुर्वीत हानिर्द्रवफलं यतः ॥
वद्वैराणि भूतानि द्वेषं कुर्वन्ति चेत् ततः । सुशोच्यान्यतिमोहेन व्याप्तानीति मनीषिणाम् ॥
विस्तारः सर्वभूतस्य विष्णोः सर्वमिदं जगत् । द्रष्टव्यमात्मवत् तस्मादभेदेन विचक्षणैः ॥
देवा मनुष्याः पशवः पक्षिवृक्षसरीसृपाः । रूपमेतदनन्तस्य विष्णोर्भिन्नमिवस्थितम् ॥
एतद् विजानता सर्वं जगत् स्थावरजङ्गमम् । द्रष्टव्यमात्मवद्विष्णुर्यतोऽयं विश्वरूपपृक् ॥
एवं ज्ञाते स भगवाननादिः परमेश्वरः । प्रसीत्यच्युतस्तस्मिन् प्रसभे क्लेशसङ्ख्यः ॥

The whole world is stricken with woe caused by the individuals themselves, or by Nature seen and unseen. That being their condition, every living being deserves to be pitied ; who, possessed of thought, would then be hostile to any ? Supposing one believes, "Other beings are happy ; I alone am so abjectly powerless," still one ought to be in good spirits ; for the outcome of hatred is only loss. If other beings bear unabated malice towards one, still the wise one ought to consider them as objects of extreme commiseration, thinking, "Ah ! these are steeped in their excessive delusion." The whole universe is a spreading-out of the Omnipresent Lord. Hence the discerning person must view it without partiality and as his own self. Gods, men, beasts, birds and trees—these, though existing apparently different, are the veritable configurations of the infinite all-pervading Lord. He who is aware of this must look upon the entire sentient and insentient creation as his own self ; because the Supreme Self has invested Himself in this multiform universe. When one experiences this, the supreme beginningless Blessed Lord who is never subjected to any change by the creation, becomes propitious, and when He is gracious, miseries die away.

Vishnu Purana.

WHAT IS BONDAGE?—II

[In this and the ensuing issues for the year, we shall publish a series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna's views on the fundamental problems of spiritual life, based on his recorded sayings. In the course of these studies we shall also have occasion to take a passing view of many questions of absorbing interest in modern life and thought. 'What is Bondage?—II' is the sixth of the series.]

IN discussing the nature of bondage in our last instalment, we saw that the fundamental basis of Avidya Maya, or the power of Ignorance that binds man, is egotism (Ahankara). According to the Master's analysis, egotism expresses itself along two channels: (1) pride and vanity and (2) attachment to 'woman and gold'. We have already stated at length the Master's views on the former. We shall now consider what he has said with regard to the latter.

I

In the first place, the Master's description of worldly bondage as consisting in 'woman and gold' should not at all be interpreted to mean that he was a woman-hater. A study of his life and teachings as a whole would reveal to anyone that his attitude towards womankind was one of profound respect bordering on worship. Being all his life a worshipper of the Deity as the Mother of the Universe, he saw in woman the symbol of the Divine Mother in a special sense. He says: "All women are parts of the Divine Mother, and therefore they should be looked upon as mothers by all." In respect of this attitude, he does not make any discrimination even from the point of view of the character of any particular woman. Hence, describing his profound respect for womanhood, he says: "When I

look on a woman of character belonging to a respectable family, I see in her the Mother Divine arrayed in the modest garb of a chaste lady. And again when I look upon the public women of the city sitting in their open verandahs arrayed in the garb of immodesty and shamelessness, I see in them the same Divine Mother sporting in a different way."

Every student of his life knows very well how these words of his were not mere professions, advice gratis given to followers, or pious sentiments reserved for platform purposes. They were precepts which he translated into action in his everyday life; they were ideals that had become unshakable realities in his consciousness.

The vividness of his perception in this regard will come home to the mind of the reader, if we give the following analysis of his thought and conduct by himself: "She has placed me in the state of a Bhakta—of a Vijnani. In this state I see that the Mother Herself has become all this. In the Kali temple I found that Mother has become even the wicked—even the brother of the Bhagavat Pandit. Try though I might, I failed to rebuke Ramlal's mother. I found she was mother in another form. It is because I find the Mother in the maidens that I worship them. My wife strokes my feet, but I salute her

afterwards. Because I am placed in such a condition, I have to return your salutes One day I was meditating on the Divine Mother within the Kali temple. I found it impossible to visualise Her form. Sometime after, I saw Her looking up from the side of the pot used for worship. She was in appearance like a prostitute named Ramani who comes to the ghat for bath. I laughed in wonder and said: 'Very Good. You like to be Ramani to-day. Accept then to-day's worship in that form.' In this way the Mother taught me: 'Even the prostitute is I Myself.' Another day while going in a carriage through Mechua Bazaar, I saw the Mother as a woman out to tempt people, dressed fashionably, with vermilion mark on the forehead and wig on the head, and smoking from a Hookah. Wondering I asked whether the Mother had chosen to take this form also, and prostrated before her." These were not mere fitful thoughts or passing moods but the expressions of a state of mind which had become natural to him.

II

We refer to these facts because they show that there have been few men who respected womanhood so much as Sri Ramakrishna did. In fact he has been criticised often for not having discriminated between noble-born women and women of no character. But this, it must be pointed out, is due to the incapacity of the critics to rise to the high spiritual level from which Sri Ramakrishna viewed womanhood. What is more, they also forget the fact that in inculcating this exalted outlook on womankind, he did not in the least leave room for moral lapses or for

frivolous aestheticism. That was why, while speaking in one breath on the Divinity of womanhood, he speaks in the next on the baneful influence of woman on spiritual life. Just as we have set forth some of his sayings on the former aspect of his teaching, it will be advantageous to do the same with regard to the latter also.

Maya which has devoured everything is, according to him, *Meye*, i.e., 'woman'. However circumspect and controlled a person might be, some taint of carnality is sure to affect any man by association with women, just as one living in a sooty room cannot save one's skin from being blackened to some extent in spite of all one's caution. A fever patient, lying between pitchers of ice-cold water and bottles of savoury pickles, cannot resist the temptation of drinking the water and tasting the sauces. So too a worldly-minded man, suffering from the high fever of lust and is thirsty after sense pleasures, cannot but succumb when placed between beauty's charms on the one side and that of wealth on the other. As a monkey sacrifices its life at the feet of the hunter, so does a man sacrifice himself at the feet of a beautiful woman. Such being the snare of woman, Sri Ramakrishna warns those who have to live with them: "Be careful. Put not too much confidence in woman. They establish their mastery over you so insiduously."

Explaining how the bondage of woman brings about bondages of every other kind, the Master would narrate the interesting story of the priests of Govindaji's temple at Joypore. Once upon a time these priests never married. They were

highly spiritual men.. Once the king of the country sent for them, but they refused to go and asked the king to go to them if he wanted to meet them. Sometime later they began to marry, and since then there was no need for the king to send for them at all. For they were in need of money for a hundred purposes, and were, therefore, forced to go to the king and court his favour, saying, "Your Highness, we have come to bless you. Here we have brought you Prasad (things offered to Deity) from the temple. Please accept it." And then addressing the devotees, the Master would add: "You can see for yourself what you have become by serving others. Those of your young men who are learned and educated in the Western fashion, silently put up with the kicks of their masters. Do you know what is at the back of all these humiliations and pangs of thralldom. It is 'woman'—subjection to the attraction of sex."

III

Such uncompromising criticism of 'woman' may leave the impression that the Master hated the fair sex, and had no respect for married life, in spite of all that we have stated before about his recognising in woman the symbol of the Divine Mother. One will, however, be forced to change this impression when it is remembered that he is not even in these sayings condemning womankind but impressing on our mind that, when approached with a sex-contaminated eye, 'woman' is the greatest danger to the spiritual aspirant. By 'woman' he means 'sex', 'carnality'; but the great teacher that he was, endowed with penetrating insight into the

workings of the human mind, he preferred to use the concrete for the abstract and always spoke of the bondage of 'woman' and not of sex.

However a man may indulge in the use of abstract concepts in his philosophical moods, he cannot help being taken up entirely with the concrete in his daily life. One may speak of sweetness, redness, goodness, etc., in the abstract, but one has knowledge and experience only of a sweet fruit, a red light and a good man, *i.e.*, of these abstract qualities as they manifest in objects coming within one's experience. The same is the case with sex. While people may speak of it in the abstract from scientific motives or considerations of etiquette, it is associated in their minds through and through with the opposite sex.

So the Master, whose motive in teaching was the spiritual awakening of men and not the winning of the approval and laudation of genteel society, always spoke of 'woman' when he dealt with the bondage of sex. That his motive in this was purely psychological, we know from how, while speaking on the same subject to his women devotees, he warned them against the dangers from 'man'.

It may, however, be asked why we do not get sayings couched in such terms in the recorded teachings of the Master. This will become clear when it is remembered that all these precious teachings of the Master have been recorded only by men who evidently heard him while he spoke to audiences composed exclusively of men. We have it on the authority of his women devotees that when he spoke to them, he warned them against the dangers from 'men'.

IV

There is another misconception that a person may possibly entertain from a superficial study of the Master's sayings on the bondage of 'woman'. Was he obsessed by an extreme form of monkish prejudice? Had he no due appreciation of the householder's ideal of life? Such misgivings are far from being true. The circumstances of the Master's life were such that he could take a most disinterested view of the two ideals of life represented by the monk and the householder. The Master was a householder in the sense that he was married, that he discharged his duties towards his wife, that he never deserted her as married men do when they take to the life of Sannyasa, and that he won the unqualified love and respect of his wife. At the same time he lived up to the highest ideal of Sannyasa, since he was a life-long celibate in spite of his being married. As these circumstances suggest, if any human being had occasion to enter fully into the spirit of these two ideals and arrive at a due estimation of their greatness, it was the Master.

Hence when he warned the householders against the influence of 'woman', and the bondage she brings about, his object was neither to depreciate the ideal of the householder's life, nor to cast aspersions on women whom he, in fact, honoured as the living symbols of the Divine Mother. What he attacks is the common notion among people that marriage gives them a legal and moral licence for full indulgence of the flesh within its limits. Moral and spiritual life as envisaged by the

Master is far from lending any support to such a notion. According to him, a person who succumbs to it is truly enslaved by 'woman', i.e., sexuality. His conception of the type of life that a spiritually-inclined householder should live is thus described: "As for you householders, you may go amongst women with a mind unattached and fixed upon God. That your mind may be thus non-attached and fixed upon God, it is good that you should often retire into solitude—a place away from either men or women; a place where you may stay at least for three days if not more, or for at least one day if not for three. Your path, again, as married men is to live with your wife like brother and sister after one or two children are born to you, and to pray to the Lord constantly that both of you may have strength to live a perfect life of spirituality and self-control."

These were the lines along which he moulded the lives of innumerable men and women, most of whom were married. One cannot therefore charge him with having no regard for the ideal of the married man and woman, or for family life.

In fact what the Master emphasises uncompromisingly is that without perfect control of the sex instinct, one's spiritual capacities do not reach their maximum development; whatever may be the order of life to which one belongs. For according to him God is very near to one who has relinquished the enjoyment of 'woman'. The glorious image of the Almighty God can be reflected only in the heart of one who has preserved

his power and purity through perfect continence. Says the Master: "Nityananda asked Sri Chaitanya, 'Why is it that all my teaching of Divine love produces no tangible result on the minds of men?' Sri Chaitanya replied: 'Because, due to their association with women, they cannot retain the higher teachings. Listen, Brother Nityananda, there is no salvation for the worldly-minded.'"

According to him, if a man practices absolute continence for twelve years, his understanding becomes purified and acquires a peculiar power and subtlety. He calls it the opening of the Medha-nadi. By such an understanding alone can man grasp spiritual truths and gain unshakable conviction with regard to them. If this point of view is properly understood and appreciated, one will cease to accuse the Master of prejudice against womankind or family life. What he wants of spiritual aspirants, whether they are men or women, householders or Sannyasins, is that they should sublimate the whole sex-instinct into a passion for the Divine. This is the purport of his teaching about the bondage of 'woman'.

VI

Next we have to consider his teachings on 'gold', the second item of the Master's favourite formula, 'woman and gold'. His characterisation of 'gold' as the source of bondage should not at all be taken to mean that he did not understand the place of wealth in life. Says the Master: "When the Tantric invokes the Deity through Sava-sadhana (the worship with the corpse), he keeps food and wine ready at hand. For the corpse will be vivified by elementals in

the course of worship, and if the elementals are not then appeased with food and wine, the worship will be interrupted, and the higher spirit will not descend. So, dwelling on the bosom of the carcase of this world, a person who desires to attain beatitude should first provide himself with all things necessary to pacify the clamour of life's demands on him. Otherwise his devotion may be broken and interrupted by the cares and anxieties of life." But he wanted the spiritual aspirant never to make money the end and aim of life. He must understand that wealth can at the most supply him with the requirements of physical life, but is in itself absolutely incapable of bringing him nearer the Truth. He may earn money by honest means, if his idea is to devote it to the life in the family based on discrimination, *i.e.*, to be used as a means of getting food, cloth and housing for the family, of worshipping the Deity and of serving Sadhus, devotees and poor men. Then again, a true devotee should have an attitude of resignation in regard to questions relating to money. He says: "There is necessity for money in family life; but do not ponder much over it and other material gains. Contentment with what comes is the best attitude. Do not be anxious to hoard. For bees labour hard to build their hives and fill them with honey, but man comes to rob them of the fruits of their labours. Those who dedicate their very life and soul to Him, those who are His devotees and have taken refuge in Him, can never think much of worldly matters. With them, expenditure is commensurate with income. As money comes

into their hands in one way, it is spent away in another."

VII

Just as the Master's criticism of 'woman' is really a warning to control the sex-instinct, his condemnation of 'gold' is in fact an exhortation to overcome the acquisitive instinct which expresses itself as greed in the mind of man. The acquisitive instinct in man is not, however, quite different in quality from the self-preservation instinct and its corresponding emotion of fear. In the animal the acquisitive instinct is satisfied when it has filled its stomach and secured a place to rest. But for man, capable of thinking of, and providing for, the future, acquisition means not only satisfying the temporary needs, but also putting himself in a position of security for the future. Hence he earns, and 'gold', which conserves the values thus earned, symbolises his longing for security in this world of change, decay and death. But is this quest for security different from the quest for self-preservation? It does not seem to be so. The fundamental urge behind both seems to be identical. We call it self-preservation when we think of the preservation of the body, and acquisitiveness, when we think of the preservation of the requisites needed for the upkeep of the body.

The significance of 'gold' is more extensive than self-preservation even. For 'gold' not only secures the good things of life but also confers power

on its possessor. The power of finance is what ultimately controls the military, political and cultural destinies of nations. And man's lust for gold is insatiable, not because the necessities of his physical life are unlimited but because the power that gold bestows on him over his fellow-beings is so enchantingly delightful for his ego. Hence the renunciation of gold means also the renunciation of our will to power.

VIII

We may now summarise as follows the analysis we have given of the Master's conception of bondage: The root of bondage is ignorance, and this ignorance has its basic expression as egotism or individuation. The ego flows out and joins the sea of life, branching into three streams. The three streams are the sex instinct or the urge for race-preservation; the acquisitive instinct or the urge for self-preservation, security and power; and the sense of self-importance or the overweening consciousness of one's own powers and attainments in respect of wealth, position, learning and influence. The nature of bondage may, therefore, be described in brief as passion, pride and craving for power. The whole being of man is beaten into these mighty waves of physical and psychical expressions. The quest of spiritual life is to calm these waves, to discover the real nature of the ego, and thus to penetrate the veil of ignorance. Then alone is man freed from bondage.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Disciple

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the original from Bengali.]

IN the previous day the Holy Mother paid a visit to Gupta Maharaj who had been ill.* Boshi and his brother Tabu had been nursing him with great attention. The Mother mentioned it and praised the two brothers very highly. She said: "They are blessed. They are indeed holy men. Who else is a holy man?"

"When Yogin Chatterjee (Swami Nityananda) was ill, his disciples too nursed him whole-heartedly. They all came from East Bengal. The children (disciples) attended the Master at Cossipore Garden. The Master used to say, 'How can they continue in their nursing if they do not enjoy a little pleasure?' He could read everyone's mind and acted accordingly. There was not much need of nursing him, but someone had to stay awake all night. He could eat very little—only a little cream of wheat pudding, and that also had to be strained. One day the Master wanted to eat an Amalaka fruit, but it was not the proper season for that fruit. Durgacharan (Nag Mahashaya) arrived with two or three fruits after three days. They were quite big. For three days Durgacharan had not touched any food. The Master took

the fruits in his hand and burst into tears. He said to Durgacharan, 'I thought you had gone away to Dacca or some such place.' Then he said to me, 'Please make some curry for him and make it hot. He comes from East Bengal and relishes hot curry.' The meal was prepared. The Master said to me, 'Arrange the food on a plate.' But Durgacharan would not eat it unless it was Prasadam. The Master himself took a morsel of the food and then gave it to Durgacharan. Then Durgacharan ate it. At that time a great deal of money was spent for the upkeep of the Cossipore Garden House. There were three kinds of cooking; one for the Master, one for Naren and the other young disciples and the third for the rest. A subscription was arranged to raise the money. One disciple fled away for fear of having to pay the subscription.

"The Master became ill through accepting the sin of others. He said, 'It is the sin of Girish. Girish could not go through the suffering.' The Master had the power to bring about his own death whenever he liked. He could easily have given up his body in Samadhi. He said, 'I want to establish unity amongst them (the

*Swami Sadanananda: a disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

disciples).’ Therefore he did not give up his body in spite of all the suffering.”

I went upstairs carrying the flowers for the worship. It was a little late in the morning and the Mother had said to me, “Please bring the flowers up to me whenever they are brought.” The Holy Mother herself used to arrange everything for the worship, and she herself performed the worship. She beckoned to me to come near her. Seated on the couch she asked me about a certain devotee.

Mother: Is he downstairs?

Disciple Yes.

Mother: What does he do? Does he study?

Disciple Perhaps he does so now and then.

Mother: Will he not go to Belur Math?

Disciple No. He has no such desire.

Mother: Please persuade him to go there.

Disciple: I have talked much with him about it. You might ask him to go to the Math and stay there for a few days at least.

Mother: My child, I have also asked him many times to do so, but he does not listen to me. He does not like to go there lest others should tease him about it. Sarat (Swami Saradananda) said to me about him, ‘Should he not pay some heed to what Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) or we ask him to do? Let him stay at the Math at least for a few days and thus respect the wishes of Maharaj.’ That is right. Let him go to Puri with Rakhai and spend a few days there. Where will he live alone? Where will he get his food?

Disciple: Getting food is not an important thing; he can live on alms. But he should have gone to the Belur Math in order to obey Swami Brahmananda and other elders.

Mother: Yes, that is true. He should have obeyed the command of the superior. The thing is, he does not want to work. Can one keep his mind in a good state without work? Can one meditate for twentyfour hours of the day? Therefore one should be engaged in some kind of activity or other; that keeps the mind in right condition. How are you getting along with your work?

Disciple: So, so.

Mother: You told me that you were going to Rameswaram. You have not gone there. You have done well. There is so much trouble in taking a trip, in changing trains, and so forth.

Disciple: Sarat Maharaj tried to arrange it for me, but where could he get so much money? The responsibility for the money would have fallen on the shoulders of Sasi Maharaj (Swami Ramakrishnananda) if I had started on this pilgrimage.

Mother: That is true.

The next day the Holy Mother was preparing betel-leaf in the room adjacent to the Shrine. It was about eleven o’clock. I went upstairs. The Mother, referring to the devotee mentioned above, said, “Has he gone away?”

Disciple: Yes. He will spend today and perhaps tomorrow also in the house of Kanjilal. Sarat Maharaj said, ‘If he has gone away out of pique, then he will go from bad to worse from day to day, but if he has gone away from a sense of shame

'then through the grace of the Master his mind may take a better turn.'

Mother: What is the matter with him? He is, after all, a man and not a woman. All can destroy, but who can build up? All can scold and tease, but how many can suggest the way to make one better? Weakness is inherent in all.

Disciple: Sarat Maharaj said, 'It is possible for a highly developed soul to live alone, but a man with impure mind falls down if he tries to live by himself.'

Mother: What is there to be afraid of? The Master will protect. Are there not many monks who live alone?

Disciple: Even Hriday at last had to go away from the company of the Master.

Mother: But can anyone always enjoy a good thing?

Disciple: He tortured the Master very much and scolded him. Is that not true?

Mother: Would not one who nursed the Master and served him with such attention scold him a little? He who takes care of a man always does so.

Disciple: He also (referring to the monk mentioned above) served you so greatly and alas, such is his fate.

Mother: Why should it not be so without discipline? Otherwise how can one expect to improve himself?

IS HINDU PHILOSOPHY LIVING ?

By Jean Herbert

[Monsieur Jean Herbert is a distinguished author and journalist of France. What follows is a slightly abridged translation of a lecture delivered by him in Paris. From a first-hand study of the tendencies in modern Hindu Philosophy mainly as indicated by the lives and works of some of the outstanding religious personalities of the present generation, he draws the conclusion that Hindu Philosophy is vigorously alive even at the present day, making unique contributions towards the evolution of a harmonious and spiritual humanity. We tender our sincere thanks to Mr. P. Seshadri Iyer, B.A., M.L., for this translation from the original.]

PHILOSOPHY IN THE EAST AND THE WEST

THERE is often a tendency to believe that Hindu Philosophy has come to a standstill a few centuries ago, that it has crystallized and that it has produced nothing since. This is an idea very current among the great savants who sufficiently know Sanskrit for plunging themselves into the study of the texts, infinitely precious from all points of view—the Vedas and the Upanishads.

But this notion is almost as naive as the thought that Descartes and Kant are the last European Philosophers and that after them we have had no original thinkers. In fact, India, from the philosophical viewpoint, is not dead. It lives with an infinitely intense life. This does not mean that modern Hindu Philosophy refuses to go to the deep roots of classical Hindu Philosophy. We ourselves have inherited most of the conceptions of Greek Philosophy and the Renaissance.

When we speak of oriental questions, we are obliged to use our current scientific and philosophic vocabulary, which is derived from Greek and Latin and which has consequently given to all words associations of ideas essentially related to Latin and Greek thought. When we turn to India, we cannot, of course, use these terms of Greek or Latin origin except as approximations, and it is evident that they cannot bear the same sense as they have in the philosophy of the ancient Greeks.

We in the West are accustomed to understand by philosophy a system of ideas scaffolded in the abstract, an intellectual construction made by thinkers of genius, more or less great, who set up hypothesis, group suppositions and erect systems more or less consistent.

In India, on the contrary, the notion of Philosophy is quite different. A philosophy is a conception which one has of life, not because one has read of it in such and such a book or one has heard another speak about it, but because one has an internal conviction thereof, which guides his life in details as well as in broad outlines and which one seeks at the same time progressively and continually to verify by experiences of the same nature as those on which modern savants establish their propositions. The conception of philosophy, according to the Hindus, resembles more the conception of chemistry or of physics entertained by a modern chemist or physicist than the idea of philosophy as understood by the great philosophers of the West. Hindu philosophy is still full of life and continues to produce rich fruits, at the same time preserving intact the principles

of classical Indian philosophy. I do not wish to give an exposition of these classical Indian principles nor to enumerate them, but I would like to take up some of those, which seem to me essentially characteristic and which we find again in modern Hindu conceptions.

There is for instance the notion of reincarnation, the fact that a soul on leaving the body, does not disappear or pass away with it, but uses (or reconstructs, according to the philosophic conception) another body to serve as its vehicle to continue its evolution. This idea is as rooted among the Hindus as the idea of life after death among the Christians.

Then there is the notion of cycles, that is to say, that creation is not the bringing forth of something out of nothing by the creator; but there are certain periods when the universe, creation, God or Brahman, (you may call it as you will) manifests, develops, blossoms and differentiates, and other periods when it goes back to the one, the undifferentiated, the absolute. It is this idea which in India takes the place of the notion of creation among us.

Another characteristic is the idea of the Guru which teaches that knowledge, in the most profound sense of the word, cannot be acquired from books, but can be got only from one, who has by his personal experience arrived at the knowledge of that which he teaches.

There is also another important point which is brought into relief, especially during this age, by the great Sri Ramakrishna. It is the idea of the unity of the goal and the multiplicity of the ways. The goal for all Hindus is continuous

spiritual development towards a state where men shall not any more be slaves to birth and death—a state of union with the Divine, the Absolute. It is this which all Hindus seek ; and they hold that this goal can be attained by different ways—different Yogas; the way of devotion, the way of disinterested work, the way of philosophy, the way of meditation and many others. Each of these totally different and often contradictory ways leads to the same goal. The Soul, according to the Hindus, is eternal, unchangeable and pure—All-existence, All-knowledge and All-bliss. Our ignorance alone prevents us from knowing it. Our progress along any one of these ways with the aid of the Guru invariably tends to tear the veil of ignorance.

These are some of the characteristic traits (the enumeration of these Hindu ideas is very incomplete), and these thoughts we find again in all the great modern thinkers.

MODERN HINDU PHILOSOPHY

What then do we mean by modern Hindu Philosophy? Well, it is that which has been produced in India not very long ago, say a century ago if you please, a phenomenon, grave and important. India, which had lived isolated from the West spiritually and intellectually, has suddenly met the West. You may say that there were many Hindus who had already visited Europe and many Europeans who had gone to India. But the Europeans who went there were mostly merchant representing machinery and factories. There were also missionaries and administrators who had above all policed the country

and collected the taxes. They were men, no doubt, excellent in their sphere; but the Hindus in general did not regard them as very strongly developed on the spiritual side. They often regarded them with some scorn.

Thus between the great thinkers of India on the one side and the representatives of Western school of thought on the other, there had not been much fruitful contact, at least so far as the Hindus were concerned. There had not been any gain except for the Europeans who had reaped a rich harvest by which the West has profited much. The Theosophical Society played an important part here because it taught us many things which we had not then known on the practical philosophy of India. Our orientalists and some of our philosophers in Europe beginning with Schopenhauer have very largely profited by the study of Indian Philosophy. But India had not profited by the spiritual or intellectual contact with the West. For the last hundred years, the great thinkers of the West have approached India and have known to respect the Hindus. The latter have said with much surprise: "But then all the Europeans are not soldiers, administrators or representatives of commerce, exclusively pre-occupied with their petty material interests! They also can interest themselves in spiritual things!"

Now the Hindus are a people with a very large heart. When they understood that we of the West were also engaged in spiritual enquiries, they thought that there may possibly be some things to learn of us, and thus was established a fruitful exchange

of ideas between the thinkers of the East and the West. I use the word thinkers for want of a better one; but I have been much criticized in India for employing the term since the Hindus do not take much account of people who work with their intellect alone as the thinkers among us often do. For the Hindus, intellect, thought and reasoning are not ends but only instruments just as our material body which we use and which is indispensable for us. Our intelligence is equally indispensable as a means, but it is not the goal.

THREE TYPES OF INDIAN THINKERS

Thus was established a contact between the great minds of the East and those among us who resemble them. Certain reactions resulted from this contact. You will permit me to employ a classification very rough and consequently somewhat false. We can classify the great Hindus of our age into three categories. There are first those who completely stand aloof from the thought of the West, who value the traditions and the culture of their own race and believe that nothing useful from the standpoint of spiritual development can be brought from the West to the East. They also think that they have the perfect, sufficient and absolute methods to which any addition will not only be superfluous but also dangerous. We may call them, if you please, the 'traditionalists'.

On the contrary, others seeing the immense material power at our disposal and the discoveries incredible to them, which our science and technique have made possible, admire us and say: "The West is right and we are wrong. We are going on

a wrong path. Hence we shall not arrive at anything. These people have sent a handful of soldiers who have conquered a people comprising many thousands. We can do nothing but follow their path." These Hindus have launched themselves into the attempt of following us.

A third group has thought: "We have conceptions, traditions and a culture, of which we know the value because we have tested them; but the West has also certain things which are very valuable. Is it necessary to reject the one for the other? Can we not combine the two?" As a consequence, certain attempts, more or less important, more or less successful, were begun to bring about a synthesis between the conceptions and the acquisitions of the East and those of the West. It is evidently this last group which will be most interesting to us and with which I shall deal at length.

Let us first consider the group of traditionalists, the great sages, some of whom are considered by the Hindus as the Living Free, that is, persons who have reached the end of spiritual development. There are people in this group who prove by their life (because an intellectual opinion has no great value among the Hindus if it cannot be verified in life) that the ancient Yogas, the ancient systems taught by the Vedas, are as efficacious now as they were and will be, and that there is no need to add or subtract anything whatever.

These people specialise themselves; some follow the way of Karmayoga (Yoga of disinterested work), others that of Bhaktiyoga (Yoga of love), and yet others that of Jnanayoga

(Yoga of knowledge) or Rajayoga (way of asceticism). All of them follow strictly and rigorously the discipline taught by the ancient masters. They practise these up to the time when they can come back to tell us: "In the same way as the ancient sages of India, I have made the attempt and followed the path, and I can assure you that this way leads to the same goal, because I have reached it." These are the great Gurus who evidently, and above all, attract the Hindus, the people with traditions and antecedents; but they interest the Europeans also. I have had the occasion to visit one or two groups of disciples gathered around their Guru, and I have had the joy of meeting a certain number of Europeans including Frenchmen who have profited largely by their teachings and feel that they have found their way.

These traditionalist Gurus are of course the most difficult for us to discover, because according to the good tradition of India, they hide themselves and intend that their disciples should be prepared to seek them laboriously before discovering them and to recognise them when they find them out. There are one or two among them, now sufficiently known through some Western intermediaries either because they have themselves written books or articles in English, or because their European disciples having worked with them, have written at length about them.

I may cite the instance of a man called Sri Ramana Maharshi, a pure philosopher who has reached by knowledge of his intellect alone (used as an instrument and not as a goal) to that stage which is considered the

end of spiritual evolution. The Maharshi denies his having discovered anything. He tells us simply; "There exists a well-known system through which people have passed before me and I have done nothing except that I have followed the same path and arrived at the same result."

Another, less known and more difficult of access to us, because he is more traditionalistic, is Swami Ramadas. The method which he has employed, the classical method of India, is to choose, as is the case in all the Yogas, a Divinity, an aspect of the Divinity—perhaps you know that all the innumerable Gods of the Hindu Pantheon are but the aspects of the Divinity—and repeat incessantly His name and to impress in this way not only on the intellect, but on the whole body, on the thoughts, on the sentiments, etc., the ideal which corresponds to that aspect of the Divinity, and, according to the power with which he concentrates on that ideal, to arrive at a stage when he becomes one with the ideal. It is this which Swami Ramadas has done for many years.

Therefore, the Vedas and the Upanishads are not merely old dusty volumes to be piled up in shelves, books which are to be placed at the disposal of the Sanscritists alone; there are in these old texts, great laws, often very detailed, of spiritual development, and even in our age these methods remain as practical as ever. My having spent two or three days with one of these masters has made a veritable revelation to me because all these texts have become living. Formerly, they were only very respectable writings before which I bowed myself with much veneration,

but I have now known that these Vedantic conceptions have a real value even in these days.

The second group, which I have arbitrarily isolated, consists of those who admire occidental thought and have been conquered by the technique of the West. But they have not reached much further than we. Some who belong to this group have understood the art of starting great industrial establishments or making sensational discoveries in certain Sciences. I have particularly in mind one of the great sons of India who passed away not long ago. I mean Sir Jagadis Bose, the great master of a new Science, the psychology of Vegetables, or the study of certain processes which were believed till then to be peculiar to animals but which he discovered under another aspect in the vegetable Kingdom. These scientists of India bring to our technique a preparation different from ours. They have not inherited the same ideas as we. They have a mind more open than ours to certain ways which we have not yet explored. They have also another mental discipline, a power of concentration which they acquire more easily than we do; and here, though we have not any great thing to learn from them, they can at least teach us to place ourselves at certain new angles of vision and indicate certain methods of work which may be useful to us. There are, alas! others in this group who plunge themselves headlong into our imperialist conceptions and make of politics a sort of divinity as we ourselves are tempted to make of it here, nationally and internationally. There are also those who have seen the prodigious success of publicity in

the West and who seek the same for the methods of Yoga, according to the principle which we seem to have admitted now, that the goods which sell most are not the best but are rather those to which the greatest advertisement has been given. The best waste away in silence.

The remaining part of my discourse I devote to treat about that class of persons who seem to me to be the most interesting, those who have attempted, I shall not say to construct a bridge between the East and the West, but, to make a sort of synthesis between our acquisitions and theirs. Among these I wish particularly to take up two who seem to me to occupy a prominent place, at all events a very important position. They are Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo who are, we may say, our contemporaries, because the first passed away less than forty years ago and the second is still living.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S GREAT WORK

Let us see what the salient points of their teachings are. You all know of Swami Vivekananda through the grand biography composed by Romain Rolland. He was a Hindu monk, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna whom almost the whole of India regards as an incarnation of the Divinity like all the incarnations known to history. He had therefore received the purest and the highest teaching. Sri Ramakrishna had seen in Swami Vivekananda one of his two or three chosen disciples, and he had transmitted to him all that he knew of the greatest and of the most divine. Swami Vivekananda himself recounts that there was around Sri Ramakrishna a small circle of disciples to

whom he taught monism, the highest philosophic conception which has ever existed in India; and a wider circle to whom the master taught dualism. Swami Vivekananda could thus draw from the truest and the deepest sources. You may tell me that in this there was no difference between him and many other Hindus. It is true. But there is this difference, that before he had even known Sri Ramakrishna, he was a student of a college affiliated to the University of Calcutta and possessed a very profound knowledge of our sciences, our literature and our mentality. He had pursued his studies in English which he knew as well as his own mother-tongue. He could speak directly with the Europeans, which was not the case with the majority of the great Hindu sages who were obliged to have recourse to the medium of an interpreter. Now, this impossibility of communicating directly is especially grave since there are not in the several European languages, words which exactly correspond to certain terms used in India so that a translation completely perverts the thought.

On the contrary, Swami Vivekananda could speak directly, on equal terms with all the Westerners. He even knew French and was at Paris to deliver an address at the Congress of the History of Religions which was held on the occasion of the Exhibition of 1900. Thus he sought a direct and personal contact with the men belonging to our race. He is, if not the first, at least one of the first among the Hindus who had a profound personal experience of India and its spiritual traditions and also at the same time a direct knowledge of our conceptions, our technique, our

science and our mode of thinking, reasoning and understanding; he was thus one of the first who could directly bring to us the fruits of the spiritual quest of India.

Until then, we had known them either through those who, coming from India, had heard others speak of these researches without having practised them and hence had no authority, or through the orientalists, who were valuable scholars, no doubt, but who had studied only the exterior. In the exclusive effort made by them for understanding the style, they had not generally gone beyond the expression and had often neglected even the foundation of the discipline, in their all-absorbing devotion to form.

Swami Vivekananda brought us, for the first time directly, without any intermediary, the profound thought and the spiritual researches of India. He embarked one fine day for America and, a little after, addressed, when he was yet completely unknown, the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. According to the reports preserved of that memorable meeting, he spoke to an assembly of five or six thousand strangers, without even knowing what he was to speak at the moment he began his address, and aroused the enthusiasm of that gathering. He was certainly one of the most impressive figures at the Parliament of Religions and has left a mark in the history of the religions and spiritual development of the West.

After that first contact, Swami Vivekananda travelled much and stayed in for a long time in the United States and Europe. He delivered many lectures before Western

audiences, in which he gave a direct exposition of what he knew thoroughly and which he could explain in a style and a form of thought we could understand.

Swami Vivekananda wrote very little, but fortunately, one of his faithful English disciples, a stenographer, has recorded a great number of his lectures. The complete text of his works in English is extant and we have begun to publish translations of many of them in French. He has given us the authentic conceptions of the great Hindu masters expressed in a way very comprehensible to us. To the West he has brought the messages of Hindu thought ; but his mission was twofold. He saw what the West lacked and gave us the high spiritual conceptions of India. On the other hand he noticed what his country stood in need of and carried there everything which could remedy the poverty of India so that people may not die of hunger but may live under more favourable material conditions for practising better the spiritual discipline.

Thus his work was twofold, he brought to us what he thought we stood in need of, and he carried to India that which he thought India needed. What he sought was less a synthesis, I believe, than an exchange and a renovation. His position is very high in the West as well as in the East. Many important modern movements have been started through his inspiration.

SRI AUROBINDO'S CONTRIBUTION

Another great master whose name I have mentioned early and who belongs to the same category of persons who have imbibed from both cultures,

is Sri Aurobindo. He lives near Madras, at Pondicherry. He has also given a very original teaching, drawn from the great traditions of India, to which he has added something new. He presents the strange phenomenon of having been educated almost exclusively in the West. He pursued all his studies in England; he prepared for the most difficult competitive examinations under the English administration and beat all past records in certain branches such as Greek and Latin. He is a man who commands an English style as pure as that of the best Englishmen of letters in our days. He knows French very well. He reads Goethe and Dante in the original. Consequently he possesses an immense European culture which very few among us can boast of. After passing his examinations, he gave up all that the West could offer him to return to his own motherland.

There he has plunged himself in a profound study of the great schools of thought in India, in the ancient texts, in the commentaries, in the conceptions which his contemporaries have given. He has written commentaries on the most venerable Hindu texts, on the Rig Veda, the Bhagavad Gita, the Isha Upanishad and on many others. They are authorities among his disciples as also among persons who keep aloof from a great part of his teachings. He wields high authority in India through his knowledge and interpretation of the classical Sanskrit texts.

Following the great lines traced by Swami Vivekananda whose works he knows perfectly. Sri Aurobindo has sought a synthesis. He himself says: "The orient has preserved and per-

fects the instrument of spiritual research which we have in India. For that purpose it has had, consciously or not, to renounce scientific and material development for the enriching and increase of power it had to acquire in other directions. On the other side, the West has cultivated scientific, technical, material and social researches which conduced to a raising of the level of life in the different strata of the population; it has made great scientific discoveries, marvellous inventions in all domains, at the cost, doubtless, of spiritual research." The fact that in the West we are orientated almost exclusively to material research, has given us conspicuous success in that; if we had devoted ourselves to spiritual preoccupations, we might not perhaps have come to the marvellous results we can boast of now. But Sri Aurobindo thinks that we have now reached a point where the two branches of researches should unite. From the scientific view-point, for example, it is more than curious to note that the latest discoveries of modern physics or chemistry are exactly the same as those we find in the most ancient Vedic texts: the principles of the conservation of matter and the conservation of energy; in biology, the principle of the evolution of the species; and lastly that other principle which the Western sciences seem to tend to at the present day—the unity of matter and energy, we may almost say, their interchangeability. It is extremely interesting to note that these conceptions are found exactly in the Vedas also.

The Hindus formerly thought that absolute passivity and the most rigorous asceticism are the necessary ele-

ments of spiritual progress; on the contrary they are inclined to consider at the present time that religion is not for empty stomachs and that for meditating, reflecting and seeking to develop even spiritually one should not be haunted by the spectre of famine.

CONCLUSION

There are yet many other points of view in which we can observe the possibility of rapprochement. For instance, we had thought, since the industrial revolution of the 18th century, that science and religion, in the sense in which we use the word religion in the West, are quite incompatible and that a savant cannot be a religious man and vice versa. We now find ourselves before a very great technical development, before formidable and marvellous inventions and before machines which we do not know how to utilise for our good. All these astonishing apparatuses which we have manufactured serve us only for massacring or, in any case, for doing evil to one another. If this is the way in which they serve us, it is not perhaps so desirable to make these inventions. There reigns in the West a very profound feeling of inquietude. We question ourselves whether we are not being crushed by that material civilisation of which we were so proud some twenty or thirty years ago, and in which alone we saw the door to the salvation of humanity. Many ask whether we should not truly learn from elsewhere how we should utilise these instruments we have invented. In all these fields we find the possibilities of rapprochement. There is not so definite opposition as there was fifty

years ago, and we no more think with Kipling that East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet. All are convinced that the time has come when we can make a grand synthesis from which a type of men, who preserve the mind of the East and the means of action of the West, may emerge. It is only later on that we can judge about this. But I believe that this attempt, which is analogous to the efforts made in the

West and of which I have not spoken here is of extreme interest to us.*

This is an attempt in which we cannot but interest ourselves and which, by continuing the great work begun by Swami Vivekananda and others, will lead us to results whose magnitude it is not yet possible to estimate.

I hope that by these few indications I have shown you that it is not presumptuous to speak of Hindu philosophy as a living thing.

ATTUNEMENT WITH THE ONE

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, formerly Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is at present preaching the message of Vedanta in different countries of Central Europe. The following are the notes of his class talks at Wiesbaden, Germany, which will appear as a serial in the *Vedanta Kesari* for some time. This is the fifth instalment.]

I

MOST people cannot begin their spiritual practices (Sadhana) with a conception of the formless aspect of the Divine. Even the Formless Divine with attributes cannot be adopted by the great many although they may think they can do it. But first they must find out this fact for themselves. Then only can proper instruction be given to them, not before. Very often we find it impossible to think of the Divine as such. So it is proper to think of all the great Incarnations of God, the great Prophets of mankind. To worship God in Spirit and in Truth

is all very well, but how to do it? If we cannot do it, it becomes a meaningless phrase, and nothing but that.

More concentration without strict ethical culture is not enough. We must learn to purify our feelings and to attain a sense of vastness, of the Infinite pervading everything. We possess only our small, limited, impure, individual consciousness; but they, the Great Ones, possess Infinite Consciousness. They rise out of the ocean; but the ocean never becomes limited to the wave-form. It is the wave that merges itself into the ocean, that becomes one with it, that

*For example: In philosophy, Emerson and Thoreau, in religion the numerous modern sects who have profoundly imbibed the wisdom of India, without having the courage to avow when they wish

to preserve a Christian attitude. The increasing number of citations from the great Hindu thinkers which are found in the great occidental works which treat of the most diverse subjects is revealing.

comes to have the ocean-consciousness.

"Lord, when I am one with Thee, it is not that Thou becomest myself, but it is I who am lost in Thee."

The wave becomes one with the ocean, loses its wave-consciousness, its wave-form, not that the ocean identifies itself with the wave or the wave-consciousness. This would be a very wrong idea and would lead to erroneous conclusions. The part becomes merged in the whole, never can the whole be identified with the part. Individual consciousness expands itself into Universal Consciousness; but Universal Consciousness can never become individual consciousness. This is the meaning of 'Thou art THAT' or 'I am Brahman'. This is the reply to all those who say, 'How can God become man?' God is never limited, and the Incarnation is only a manifestation, never the whole of God. We are just like small waves and tiny ripples that are merged in the ocean, and it is very difficult for us even to have this full wave-consciousness. We are like bubbles, at the most a very small wave; but the Great Incarnations are mountain-high waves, always fully conscious of their true nature and consciously in touch with the ocean. What happens if you try to take a small bubble out of the water? The bubble only bursts, for no bubble can ever exist by itself without this ocean-background; but the trouble is that we are not conscious of it. We believe ourselves to be separate entities, separate from the ocean and separate from each other, and then all other mistakes follow as a matter of course and cannot be avoided.

II

Although we take our limited existence to be real, we find, when we dive deep into the matter, that it is unreal. The conception of its reality is wholly due to ignorance, to the fact of the bubble imagining itself to be independent of the ocean. Through this we come to cherish so many petty, undignified conceptions. When we get rid of the Upadhis (limiting adjuncts), we rise above all such illusory and misleading conceptions and ideas and become dignified, self-conscious beings. (Self-conscious is used in a higher metaphysical sense.)

Christ does not mean a personality; but a state of absolute existence. Buddha does not mean a personality; but a state of absolute existence. Theirs is always the Saviour's consciousness, the Infinite Consciousness—not the limited individualised one that we possess. Ours is impure, limited consciousness: theirs is unlimited consciousness.

The personality can be merged in the Principle; but the whole Principle can never be identified with the personality. As Substance it is all one and the same—the One Undivided, Indivisible, Eternal, Unchanging Consciousness—but it cannot be denied that there is something which is not that during the time of our clouded, individualised state. This something other than the one Substance creates all this differentiation.

Each one of us has raised a thought-world round himself, and it is that which individualises us all.

Wherefrom did this impulse come? Wherefore did it come? What was our condition before this individualised form came into existence?

Wherefore does this body and all these diverse and manifold thought-forms exist? Why does the Formless assume forms? It is all indescribable. When we study the lives of the Great Ones, we find, however, that their consciousness is the Infinite Consciousness beyond all limitation; and not the limited one, although they appear in a limited form.

The moment this individualised state is brought about, passions and desires crop up and try to get sway over us. If passions, desires, body-consciousness and all the rest really belonged to our essential nature, we could never rid ourselves of them, however hard we might try to do so. But fortunately this is not the case. They are merely our second nature.

III

The touch of the Great Ones brings to us also Universal Consciousness; it bursts the bonds of this limited existence by bringing in new light and a deeper kind of awareness that lies hidden in all of us.

By lifting ourselves consciously to the plane of their thoughts, we get rid of all these wrong and deep-rooted notions of being men and women, i.e., limited beings, drop the limiting adjuncts and get a new and purer sense of existence. Sometimes through the intensity of our feeling we can give such a stimulus to the Cosmic Mind that form arises out of the Cosmic Mind, or if the form does not arise, at least the Cosmic idea does so to show us the way.

If you connect your light with the electric current of a power-station you get plenty of light. The dynamo gives all the necessary current;

but you must connect your wire with that of the dynamo.

By coming into touch with the Great Ones we also are magnetised, as it were, but we must first become attuned. Our attempts at meditation are for polarising our mind. When the contact is established the current flows automatically. So you must make yourselves good conductors. Then the current will flow in a natural and unbroken way. We do not give a stimulus to something that is non-existing, but to something that is at all times, and then as the result of that stimulus something comes up to the conscious plane.

If you go and throw a stone into the water, you see the reaction, but you do not create the water for all that. There is something other than ourselves, something that is more creative than ourselves. So, in a way, prayer becomes something like a very big stone thrown into the water. The water is there, but the stone gives the stimulus to it; and then the reaction follows as a matter of course.

We should develop great intensity in ourselves. Intensity is one of the principal factors in the life of the aspirant. Real spiritual life actually begins with a glimpse of the Truth and not before. It begins when I see at least the reflection of the sun. Before that there can never be any real beginning of spiritual life. Unless we ourselves have at least some glimpse of the Divine, we are all atheists, whatever we may think ourselves to be, or whatever we may call ourselves. Only that person who has had a glimpse of the Divine is not an atheist, all others are atheists.

IV

In the beginning you have to accept a certain proposition which is to be verified by yourself afterwards. Spiritual life is but a constant checking and finding out how far one has realised the truth of the proposition with which one has started, and everything else is but a preparation for it, a preliminary training to make the body and the mind fit; and for that reason all the preliminary conditions and purificatory disciplines have to be gone through and fulfilled before real spiritual life can be taken up.

The mind is just like a mirror. We have allowed it to be hidden under layers and layers of cobwebs and dirt. So there is no reflection. Remove all these layers of dirt and cobwebs, then you will see the picture.

Now you must lead as conscious and as pure a life, physically and mentally, trying as far as possible to erase all the old impressions and bringing in better ideas and better pictures. And this is always a very troublesome and very slow process; but each aspirant has to pass through it.

If an impure mind comes in touch with something holy, there is no reflection. So spiritual life is a cleaning process to make the mind a good reflector of the higher things.

Set fire to all the desires lurking in the mind and then cleanse the mind with the ashes that are formed thereby. And when the mind becomes clean,

then only it takes on any colour. First the dirty cloth must be sent to the laundry, and then afterwards you dye it. When it has become perfectly clean, it will take on any colour beautifully.

So this purifying process must be gone through by everybody without any exception. There is no comfortable high-road leading to salvation. We must first attune our mind to the Truth. The body is to be attuned, polarised, in a certain way. The mind must be attuned, polarised, in a certain way, and unless this condition is fulfilled, at least to a great extent, no contact can be brought about.

The Infinite can never be expressed in terms of the finite. It can only be hinted at.

"Only a part of this Infinite is manifested as what we call the Cosmic Universe."

All the Great Souls rise out of the Cosmic mind of which our individual minds are parts.

Because we bubbles find it impossible to come in touch with the ocean, we want to come in touch with the mighty waves.

By loving them with great intensity, with our whole heart, we come to love their ideas. Until we reach realisation, there should be great intellectual study of the lives of the Great Ones and cultivation of great love for them. This unconsciously colours our mind more and more and takes us finally to the goal.

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICAN LIFE

By Bhai Manilal C. Parekh

[Bhai Manilal C. Parekh is a well-known religious preacher and author. For the past twenty-five years he has been a teacher of religion, first as a missionary of Brahmo Samaj, next as one of the Christian Church and afterwards as an independent teacher of Bhagavata Dharma. The present essay gives a vivid and interesting picture of American life which he had the opportunity of studying directly during his stay in that country. While Bhai Manilal is warmly appreciative of the perfections which the American civilization exhibits in some of its expressions, he criticizes with becoming restraint and judiciousness the harmful tendencies that meet the eyes of even a casual observer of American life.]

NEW VISITOR'S FIRST IMPRESSION

MOST Hindus who go to the United States land first in New York. It is no wonder, then, that the contrast between America and India should strike them to start with, and it is a contrast as keen as could be. Life in India is on the whole rural, and the few cities that we have are not entirely free from the atmosphere of village life that generally prevails over the country, and consequently a city like New York would strike a Hindu as a characteristic embodiment of Western or rather American civilization. The colossal magnitude of this city together with all its mechanical and other complexities of life would naturally frighten him as it often does even the people of Europe, and he would start with prejudice against American life and civilization.

A great deal depends thus on the first impression a traveller has of a country as to how it appears to him. I saw both Chicago and New York after a stay of nearly eight months in the United States, and even then the feeling that was aroused in my mind when I saw the central part of Chicago for the first time, was one of

uncanniness. Its immense structures together with the huge traffic that is going on there at all hours of the day still haunt my memory as something far from human, and I cannot reconcile myself with it even now at this distance of time and place. This feeling was heightened in New York, and I always thought of it as not a city but a monstrosity. I must say, however, that I enjoyed my stay in both these cities as I did my visit all the time I was in the United States, but things in both these cities were on too big a scale for me to be happy in, especially if I had to live there long.

On the other hand I was very happy in my first impression of this great country. I came to California which, of all States, is the most like India, and my acquaintance with American life and civilization began with what I saw in the small University town of Berkeley. I had a long voyage of nearly six weeks, during most of which I saw a good deal of the Chinese and the Japanese on the various boats I came by and also in what little time I spent in both China and Japan. What I saw of these people had aroused in me only feelings of keen contrast, because the Chinese

and the Japanese, in spite of the fact that they are orientals, have a civilization which is very different from ours. At any rate the barriers of race and language were too evident to be overlooked and to be easily crossed. One naturally felt all the time, therefore, that he was moving in an atmosphere which was truly foreign.

The very reverse was the case when I landed in San Francisco. I at once felt the common bond of language through my knowledge of English, and I felt more fully at home than I had done since I left Bombay. There was the racial kinship too between myself and the people amongst whom I had now come, and in comparison with the Chinese and the Japanese, the Americans looked like cousins parted from us only the other day. I may say here in passing that being light in colour I was rarely, if ever, taken during my stay of nearly fourteen months to be a stranger, and this greatly added to the happiness of my visit. Thus for several days at first I myself was surprised at the great similarity of life and manners and even faces of the people that I found in this far country of the Western World to those in India—a thing quite unusual and different from what I had expected.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF AMERICAN LIFE

(a) *The Great Wealth*

The special features of Western or rather American life, however, became clearer to me as time went. The first and perhaps the foremost of these was the phenomenal prosperity of the American people. Evidences of it are found everywhere and in everything

that America has or does. Even in this small town of Berkeley I was struck by this feature of American life from the very first, and although since then I saw something of the poorer side of life in the United States, the feeling still remains with me that the prosperity of this country far surpasses anything one sees anywhere else. It is inconceivably great, and it can be realised only when one sees it. Life in this country is lived on a larger and more magnificent scale than in any other land. Because of this the villages in this country have the character of towns, towns that of cities and these last of super-cities. Houses, school-buildings, shops, theatres and places of amusement, churches and roads, not to speak of sky-scrapers and such other buildings of a Cyclopean character which one finds everywhere in such abundance, are more spacious and comfortable than anywhere else. For the first time in the history of the World, the vastness of Nature has been matched by the power and effort of man, and life is made more easy and comfortable for millions of people than it has ever been in the past.

The standard of life here is so high that every visitor is naturally struck by it. At the first glance one can see that the people here eat and dress better, that their houses have finer furnitures and the shops finer goods than among corresponding classes and circumstances in any other country. For weeks, after I stepped on the shores of this land, I was amazed at the extraordinary wealth and prosperity, wealth and luxury, marks of which I found everywhere. I saw that what were luxuries, and often

rare luxuries, in other countries were necessities and even bare necessities here. I had read a great deal about this wealth of the American people, but the reality that I saw far surpassed anything I had imagined. Often I wondered how such things were possible in this unfortunate world of ours. Sometimes I was pained, without being in the least jealous, at the sight of this great luxury and wealth enjoyed by millions of people, while millions elsewhere, and especially in India, had to live under conditions of extreme poverty and penury. Hitherto I had taken such misery as I had known in India as inevitable in human life, and it came to me as a welcome surprise to learn from the example of the United States that it need not be so.

I was often reminded, however, of the experience that Emerson had in the year 1841 when he went to England. Nearly a century back this sage and prophet of the United States said in regard to the wealth and prosperity of England that it was an argument for atheism. If Emerson had this kind of feeling then, how much more would a Hindu in the year 1930 feel the same way in view of the immensely greater wealth of the States? The fact is that the American philosophy of life is entirely different from that of India. No two countries afford a greater contrast in this matter than these. Of all people, the Hindu has believed in the Gospel of Poverty, whereas the American believes more than any one else perhaps in that of Prosperity. Both these views are extreme, and the full truth does not lie with either of them. I had until now fondly imagined that the Hindu

view of life was the only true one, but I am glad to say that what I saw of the life of the American people has converted me to the belief that both these views of life are mutually complementary, and a wholesome synthesis of the two is what the world needs. It is true perhaps that both America and India can render each other much help in offering valuable correctives to their extreme tendencies.

(b) Sanitation

Allied very closely to this phenomenal prosperity of the American people, if not an integral part of it, is the sanitation of this country. It is not that the United States is easily the first in this matter, it is simply perfect. One is often tempted to feel that the immense mechanical development of this country is well worth all the trouble for making this sanitation alone possible, if for nothing else. If cleanliness is next to Godliness, then be sure the American people are nearer the Kingdom of Heaven than any other. They themselves, however, will be the first to deny this last proposition, but that does not alter the fact that the people here live in a present paradise of their own so far as sanitation is concerned. Cleanliness, personal, domestic and civic, is the rule, and the olfactory organ and the eyes of the people are trained better, so far as this side of life is concerned, than elsewhere. The exception in the matter of civic sanitation that I found was Chicago, where dirty papers and even rubbish of all kinds were flying about in many parts of the city. All this gave an appearance to the city which was jarringly discordant with

the experience I had of the rest of the land.

(c) *Dignity of Labour*

What I may call the American love for work is another characteristic of the people that impresses a foreign visitor. Dignity of labour has been raised to a virtue here as perhaps nowhere else. It is a national virtue and is shared even by Rockefellers and Fords. It does one good especially when he comes from old countries such as India, China, etc., to see nearly half of the huge student population of this land engage itself eagerly in all kinds of work and manual labour to pay for their education. This may partly explain the lack of culture of the educated people in the United States so often commented upon especially by the European tourists, but it is well worth remembering that it is just this which has prevented the growth of snobbery and parasitism which are so common in other countries. Dignity of labour is an essential part of all true culture as is being increasingly recognised to-day, and this is one of the lessons that the United States has been teaching the world for a century. Its immense success has set a seal to the recognition of this dignity as nothing else could have done, and in consequence the stature of entire mankind has risen. It was with welcome surprise that I came across several instances of young men with degrees and boys of tender age belonging to good middle class families earning in their vacations money enough to pay for their education by manual labour, and that too, at times, of the roughest kind. A thing like

this is impossible even to-day in most countries.

This attitude towards labour and work has contributed not only towards the economic development of the land but has been of immense benefit mentally and morally also. The educated man here is not the less of a man on this account but rather more, and the ordinary labourer has a love for education, which is more or less absent in men of the corresponding class in other lands. There is no such gulf here between the high and the low in culture as is inevitable in a society where the old ideals prevail and where manual labour is considered mean. In addition to this, the greater health and fitness and beauty of person which an average American, both man and woman, enjoys in comparison with others, have this love for work and labour as one of the causes. It is a great asset to the country that its pioneering character is still retained in this as in many other things.

(d) *Democracy*

Democracy is perhaps the central feature of American life. This country is a real melting pot of many kinds of distinctions. Here are gathered together people belonging to most of the races and representing many faiths. The only parallel to this in this matter is India, where different races and people have poured in from the earliest times down till our times. Those, therefore, are the only countries which have had to face the race-problem on a large scale. India's solution was the Caste-system which originally meant division along the lines of colour. This system, in spite of all the defects that are rightly or

wrongly attributed to it, has rendered a real service to India and has given its civilization a peculiar character. So remarkable have been the results of this system that, until very recent times, many of the important observers, who came from the West ever since India came in close contact with Europe some four centuries back, were struck by it, and it was usual for them to speak of it with admiration. Abbe du Bois, a Roman Catholic Missionary, in his well-known book "Hindu Customs, Manners and Ceremonies" written more than a century back, speaks of this socio-religious system of the Hindus as "the Chef d'œuvre, the happiest effort of the Hindu Legislator". America is faced to-day by a similar situation and is in the process of evolving a kind of solution of this huge, difficult and delicate problem of race-relations. A new Caste-system is out of question, though I was rather surprised at hearing a well-known English Professor say in one of his classes in an American College, while narrating some of his interesting and funny experiences with one of his American cooks, "Give us a Caste-system."

THE PROBLEM OF RACES

Indeed, there is a Caste-system and something even worse, where the white and the black meet. This is not all. The yellow people also are segregated in communities and compartments of their own. The Red Indians, most honourably to themselves, keep themselves off from the track of the white man and his civilization. The Phillipines, the Mexicans and the Hindus live their

own life apart from others. The Jews form a Caste by themselves because of their religion, if not for their race. The Syrians, the Armenians, the Greeks and people of many other nationalities still distinguish themselves by their original stock, and this is done to such an extent that one is tempted to ask where the Americans are.

None the less among the white people—in general the so-called Nordics—there is a slow but steady merging of national and even credal distinctions. The Jews also are being gradually included in this process. Consequently there is already emerging a new social order such as has been rarely witnessed before. Man here can face man without that fear and subservience on one side and a feeling of superiority reaching even to the point of insolence on the other, which have characterised social relations of people hitherto in most countries. If this constitutes *manhood*, and undoubtedly it is a most important part thereof, then certainly this country is the richest of all, for manhood after all is the chief asset of a nation. Again and again while reading the rosy descriptions of socialization and democratization of life in Russia, I felt that the United States had achieved this and much more, and all this was done without any compulsion. It may be true that in this country nine-tenths of the immense wealth of the land is concentrated in the hands of only one-tenth of the population, and that the Government of the country is run by large capitalistic interests, but none the less there is greater freedom here between man

and man than perhaps anywhere else.

There is a dark side to this bright picture, and that constitutes a most serious blot on American life and civilisation. It stultifies a great deal the royal nature of its democracy. This defect, as said before, lies in the sphere of race-relations. The Negroes are out of the pale of this great and unique democracy. The Nordics of North America have undoubtedly the worst colourphobia of all people. The French are infinitely superior to them in this respect. I believe it was Dr. Kilpatrick who said once that the Americans had the worst race-prejudice, and the statement is true indeed. There is no justification for the treatment the Negro gets throughout this vast land and especially in the south, and now, also for the exclusion of the Asiatics from immigration.

The sense of humiliation that every Negro feels in this great land of freedom militates against its democracy and large-hearted humanity, not to speak of its Christianity. It is not the Negro's fault that he has his colour, nor that he is in such numbers in the United States. Rather he was brought here against his will and for the sole convenience of the white man. The black man on the other hand has served the country with his blood, and the foundations of the immense prosperity of this land have been laid to no small extent on Negro labour. In return for this, as it were, the race, has been crucified, and it is out of this crucifixion that the Negro spirituals, who, in many ways are some of the finest products not only

of American but of Christian culture in general, have come. Some of the finest music in the States are heard among the Negroes, and in wit and humour, in loyalty and love, in sweetness and religious emotion, they are a match for any people. They have great moral and spiritual reserves which have yet to be tapped, and when this race will reach its maturity the world will be richer for that.

Sometimes Hindus too have to suffer from this colourphobia on the part of the white man in this hospitable land. Though personally I had no such experience, I came across one instance of such race-prejudice which deserves to be known throughout the States at least. The story is authentic. I heard it first in a Mission Board office and then got it confirmed by the man himself.

A Christian student from India studying in New York was invited last summer (1930) to a New England town by one of the Protestant ministers to speak in his Church. In order to reach this place he had to take a train in the morning from an intermediate place which he reached at 1 A.M. As he could not stay at the Station for the night, he went in a taxi to one of the hotels where he was refused admission on account of his dark skin. In all he tried nine hotels that night, and everywhere he met with refusal. Not knowing where to turn so late at night, he went to the Police Station and asked the officer-in-charge to give him a place to sleep in for the night. Though the officer was rough at first, he, however, took him to a cell kept for prisoners. No sooner, however, was the young

Hindu put into it, the foul air and the dirty smell [of the place were too much for him, and he cried out to the officer to take him out of the place. This was done, and then the taxi-driver out of pity for him took him to his own place and gave him shelter for the night. He did more. He gave him his own bed and himself slept in the car. The next morning the Hindu, while parting, expressed his deep gratefulness to the man and said that he had acted towards him the part of the Good Samaritan. To his great surprise, however, he learnt that the man had never heard the story nor had he read the New Testament.

THE GLORY OF DEMOCRACY

In spite of all this, however, the democratic spirit of the American people is a most vital thing and a great asset to the entire world. In this the United States has rightly been an example to the world for over a century. An Abraham Lincoln or a Woodrow Wilson can grow only in this land of freedom. The foundations of the religious, social and political life of this country have been laid upon Liberty and Equality, and the atmosphere here is pervaded by the spirit of the Pil-

grim Fathers. It is not the material wealth of the land alone that has attracted to it people from all lands who have poured themselves into it by the hundred thousand: the personal and social liberty that one has here has been a potent factor in drawing men of different races and nationalities. Not only the non-conformists among Protestants but the Jews, the Armenians, the white Russians, etc., in fact all those who found it impossible to live in the Old World for various reasons, flocked to the hospitable shores of this land, and they and their progeny have had a happy time ever since. In their turn all these groups have contributed very valuable elements to the culture of the land and will continue to do so still, if the steam-roller of Americanism does not press out their special peculiarities and reduce them all to the dead level of a uniform, colourless individualism. The Caste-system in India, while it did harm in some ways, insured cultural autonomy of each group, and this added greatly to the cultural variety and richness of the country, and one wonders if there can be something of an equivalent to this in the United States.

(To be completed in the next issue)

CULT OF BHAKTI IN THE MAHABHARATA

By Prof. Jadunath Sinha, M.A., Ph.D., P.R.S.

[Dr. Sinha is a noted professor of Meerut College and the author of *Indian Psychology: Perception* and *Indian Realism*, the two outstanding books published on the respective subjects. In the present article he makes a lucid, concise and delightful study of the Bhakti Cult based especially on the Narayaniya Parva.]

THE NATURE OF THE RELIGION OF DEVOTION

THE exposition of the cult of Bhakti is found in the Narayaniya section of the Mahabharata. "The Bhagavata religion as described in the Mahabharata is the theistic religion of devotion and love."¹ "Bhakti or intense love of God, which is not motivated by any desire, is the essential feature of the Mahabharata religion."² It is a personal religion of loving communion with God. "It is not satisfied with the impersonal Brahman of the Upanishads; it converts Brahman into the personal God or Ishvara."³ The Bhagavata religion is the religion of those who are devoted with their whole souls to Narayana⁴. It is the religion of *sattva* (holiness), or the *Sattvata* religion.⁵ It is the religion of Ekantins, who offer their whole-hearted devotion to God."⁶ Persons are very rare, who are devoted to Narayana with their whole souls.⁷

NARAYANA HIMSELF THE AUTHOR OF THE RELIGION OF DEVOTION

Narayana Himself, the Lord of the Universe, initiated the great saint,

Narada, into the mysteries of the cult of Bhakti with all its details.⁸ This foremost of cults is primeval and eternal. It cannot be easily comprehended. It is exceedingly difficult to practise it. Only those persons in whom *sattva* (purity) predominates can practise it.⁹ This cult was obtained by Narada from Narayana Himself, the Lord of the Universe.¹⁰ This is the religion of those who offer their whole-hearted and undivided devotion to Narayana.¹¹ The illustrious Narayana Himself is the promulgator of this cult, in its entirety, contained in the *Pancharatra* scriptures. In this cult Narayana is the soul object of exposition. The *Pancharatra* scriptures inculcate that Narayana is the one sole object of worship.¹² Narayana imparted the religion of devotion to Narada, Narada explained this eternal and immutable course, called *Ekanta* and followed by the Yatis and the denizens of the white island (*Shveta-dvipa*), to Krishna.¹³ The holy one, Krishna, imparted the religion of devotion to Arjuna when he was disheartened in the field of battle.¹⁴ This is how the religion of devotion

¹ J. N. Sinha, *The Bhagavata Religion; The Cult of Bhakti, in The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 49. ² Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 486. ³ *Ibid*, p. 486. ⁴ M. Bh., xii, 349, 82. ⁵ *Ibid*, 84; *Ibid*, 82, *Nilakanthi Tika* & M. Bh., xii, 387,

28; *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 49. ⁶ M. Bh., xii, 349, 62. ⁷ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 54. ⁸ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 55. ⁹ *Ibid*, xii, 347, 9. ¹⁰ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 82. ¹¹ *Ibid*, xii, 360, 67-68. ¹² *Ibid*, xii, 349, 85. ¹³ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 8.

has found currency in the world. Persons of unclean souls cannot comprehend the religion of devotion, one can acquire it only through the grace of God and divine men.¹⁵

THE CONCEPTION OF GOD

God is immanent as well as transcendent. He is the Supreme Lord and Creator of the universe.¹⁶ He is called Vishnu because He pervades the whole universe.¹⁷ He is called Vasudeva because He is the abode of all creatures.¹⁸ He is called Narayana. He is the Lord and Creator of the world.¹⁹ He is called Sattvata because the attribute of *sattva* (holiness) constitutes His nature.²⁰ He has never swerved from it. Therefore He is called Achyuta.²¹ *Sattva* in creatures follows from His nature. He is the immanent spirit in all persons in whom *sattva* predominates. For these reasons He is known as Sattvata.²²

The Mahabharata freely preaches the immanence of God. God is immanent in the world. He pervades the universe.²³ He constitutes the warp and woof of the world. Smell, taste, colour, touch and sound, the specific qualities of earth, water, light, air, and ether respectively, have Narayana for their soul. Time also has Narayana for its soul. Mind also, which is the attribute of the Unmanifest (Prakriti) has Narayana for its soul. The Supreme Being is the cause of all these as Purusha. He is, again, the cause of everything as Pradhana (or Prakriti). He is the

foundation of all things. He is the sole agent. He is the cause of the variety of things in the universe. He is the invisible power which controls everything.²⁴

God is the indwelling Spirit in all creatures. "Hari is Himself the Kshetrajna (Soul). He is the Jiva in all creatures, transcending the five primal elements. He is the Mind that directs and controls the five senses."²⁵ "Truth has Narayana for its refuge. *Rita* has Narayana for its soul."²⁶ He is the source of all values. He is the repository of all ideals. He is the eternal fulfilment of all our aspirations. The presiding deities of fame, beauty and prosperity have the Supreme Deity for their soul.²⁷ He resides in fame, knowledge, prosperity, self-restraint, penances, grand achievements and all other covetable things in the universe. He is the restraint of the senses. He is vows and observances. He is mortification. He is severe mortification. He is very severe mortification. He is the embodiment of correct reasoning. He is the embodiment of unswerving Yoga or concentration of mind. It is He who observes vows and performs other religious rites.²⁸ It is He, again, who is the receptacle of the restraint of the senses and penances.²⁹ He accepts the offerings that are dedicated in sacrifices. Whatever acts are performed in honour of the gods or the ancestral spirits, whatever gifts are made, whatever penances are performed,

¹ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 61. ²⁰ *Ibid*, xii, 348, 18; xii, 347, 7; xii, 348, 28; xii, 344, 14. ¹⁷ *Ibid*, xii, 342, 42. ¹⁸ *Ibid*, xii, 342, 40; xii, 348, 91. ¹⁹ *Ibid*, xii, 348, 18. ²² *Ibid*, xii, 343, 75-76. ²¹ *Ibid*, xii, 348, 79. ²³ *Ibid*, xii,

343, 75-76. ²⁵ *Ibid*, xii, 342, 42. ²⁴ *Ibid*, xii, 348, 80-86. ²⁶ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 58-59; E.T., p. 849. ²⁷ *Ibid*, xii, 348, 79; E.T., p. 842. ²⁸ *Ibid*, xii, 348, 84. ²⁹ *Ibid*, xii, 339, 4. ³⁰ *Ibid*, xii, 347, 16-17.

have God for their refuge.³⁰ It is He that ordains the end. He is the Supreme Lord, the refuge and protection of all. He is that Being who is called Amrita. He is the immutable and the immortal. He is the refuge of all things and beings.³¹

Thus, God is immanent in the world and in finite creatures. He is the immanent spirit in them all. But He is not wholly immanent in the universe. He is both transcendent and immanent. He is immanent in the universe, and yet transcends it. He is both active and inactive. He is both cause and effect.³² He is endowed with the highest power. He is Supreme³³ endowed with the highest intelligence, He is the Creator and the Ordainer of the universe.³⁴ He is the Creator, the Lord, and the Providence. He transcends the empirical world of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Though really divested of attributes, He assumes attributes for manifesting Himself³⁵. He is regarded as both possessed of, and free from, attributes.³⁶ Thus He is both the unconditioned and the conditioned. In Himself, He is absolute and unconditioned. But He becomes relative and conditioned only to manifest Himself. Transcending the three attributes of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, He is regarded as Purusha in the scriptures. He has created the Unmanifest (Prakriti) constituted by *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.³⁷

God is not merely an immanent principle in the world and finite creatures. He transcends them as the Supreme Person. He is the giver of

boons, happiness and wealth. He is the greatest friend. He is kind to all His devotees.³⁸ He is the father and mother of all creatures. He is an object of reverence with the entire universe.³⁹

HUMAN WILL ABSORBED IN DIVINE WILL

The Mahabharata does not seem to believe in the freedom of the human will. The energy of man is the energy of God⁴⁰. Whatever acts, good or bad, are done in heaven or on earth, in the sky or in the waters, are all caused by God.⁴¹ Still He is never touched by acts good or bad. *Sattva* (purity), *rajas* (energy) and *tamas* (inertia) are the three primal attributes. These are the natural tendencies in the finite creatures. They are the main springs of their action. They are created by God in finite souls (Jivas) who enjoy their action. God transcends them all, and they cannot touch Him. Having created them Himself, He is above them all. But though in His essential nature He is free from these attributes, as the Inner Soul of the finite souls, He enjoys and endures their action.⁴² Thus He is in them and yet above them.

God or Narayana has four forms. Vasudeva is the highest form. Vasudeva creates Sankarshana. Sankarshana creates Pradyumna. Pradyumna creates Aniruddha. From Aniruddha springs Brahman. From Brahman spring all creatures, animate and inanimate.⁴³

³⁰ *Ibid*, xi, 348, 90-91. ³¹ *Ibid*, xii, 347, 17-20. ³² *Ibid*, xii, 349, 60. ³³ *Ibid*, xii, 348, 92. ³⁴ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 59. ³⁵ *Ibid*, xii, 348, 92. ³⁶ *Ibid*, xii, 385, 40. ³⁷ *Ibid*, xii,

385, 29-30. ³⁸ *Ibid*, xii, 389, 4. ³⁹ *Ibid*, xii, 340, 127. ⁴⁰ *Ibid*, xii, 348, 86. ⁴¹ *Ibid*, xii, 349, 74. ⁴² *Ibid*, xii, 340, 26-28. ⁴³ *Ibid*, xii, 340, 70-72.

THE CULT OF BHAKTI

"God cannot be apprehended by the senses. He is beyond the ken of logic or argument, and is attained only through whole-hearted devotion. Penances and religious observances lacking in devotion cannot lead to the attainment of God."⁴⁴ Those who are well versed in the Pancharatra scriptures and perform the duties enjoined by them, and are devoted with their whole souls to Narayana succeed in entering into Him.⁴⁵ The Supreme Lord, Hari, is pleased only with those acts which are well performed with a full knowledge of duties,—which do not entail any injury to any creature.⁴⁶ A devotee should cultivate goodwill to the sentient creation. He should cultivate *ahimsa* in thought, word and deed. He should be full of compassion for all creatures. He should be endowed with the knowledge of the soul. He should always do good to others. He should perform all his duties without any desire of fruits thereof.⁴⁷ He should dedicate all his actions to God. He should dedicate all his possessions to the service of God and hold himself as His custodian. He should regard his wealth, wife and children, and animals as obtained from Narayana. He should offer all his possessions to the Supreme Deity. He should discharge all his obligatory and optional duties with a mind fixed on Narayana. He should eat food only after he has dedicated it to Him. He should cultivate *truth* and *non-*

injury (*Ahimsa*). He should never deviate from them. These are the cardinal virtues⁴⁸. The offerings in the Vedic sacrifices should consist of vegetable seeds. Animal sacrifice cannot be the religion of good and righteous people.⁴⁹ A devotee should totally abstain from speaking untruths and doing any injury to any creature. He should purify and consecrate his mind by constantly reciting the holy name of God. Japa (silent repetition of Divine name) is a mighty agent in spiritualising a person. There are three kinds of Japa. One may recite the holy name loudly, or in an inaudible voice, or mentally. Mental Japa is the best of all. A devotee in the highest stage is engaged in silently meditating on God with a heart entirely set upon Him.⁵⁰ A devotee, with his mind wholly concentrated upon God, should always think of Him. Then he can never meet with any obstacles. He is sure to be crowned with ascetic success and is highly blessed. He is freed from the attributes of *rajas* and *tamas*. He is, no doubt, competent to enter into God and abide in Him.⁵¹

Some persons adore Narayana in the form of Aniruddha. Some adore Him in the forms of Aniruddha and Pradyumna. Some adore Him in the forms of Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Sankarshana. Others adore Him as consisting of four forms, *viz.*, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Sankarshana and Vasudeva⁵². Those persons who seek God through the path of Know-

⁴⁴ *The Bhagavata Religion, The Cult of Bhakti in The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 49; M.Bh., xii, 840, 16-17; xii, 339, 4. ⁴⁵ *Ibid.* xii, 350, 71. ⁴⁶ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 56. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 62-68; cf. *Narada*

Sutra. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.* xii, 336, 20-24; cf. also 81.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* xii, 338, 4-5. ⁵⁰ *Ibid.* xii, 337, 24 & *Nilakanthi Tika* & xii, 339, 2. ⁵¹ *Ibid.* xii, 340, 19-20 & 49. ⁵² *Ibid.* 349, 57.

ledge realise Him in the highest form only through His three lower forms. But those persons who approach Him through devotion and are devoted to Him with their whole souls at once attain the highest end and realise God in His highest form of Vasudeva, beyond Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.⁵³ Devotion leads to the highest kind of beatitude.

DEVOTION AND MOKSHA

There are three kinds of dispositions according as *tamas* (darkness or ignorance), *rajas* (energy or activity) or *sattva* (purity or holiness) predominates in the mind. The person of *Sattvika* disposition, who is wedded to the attribute of *sattva*, can attain liberation which is regarded as made up of the attribute of *sattva*. The person whose mind is purged of *tamas* and *rajas* and is pervaded by *sattva* can comprehend Brahman.⁵⁴ Devotion leads to the knowledge of Brahman. It purges the mind of *tamas* and *rajas* and fills it with *sattva*. *Sattva* flows from the nature of God. A person whose mind is made of pure *sattva* can attain emancipation through the grace of God. *Emancipation entirely depends upon God*. Hari never confers His grace upon a person whose mind is dominated by *tamas* and *rajas*. He must cast off the principle of *Pravritti* or attachment and adopt the path of *Nivritti* or renunciation, because God shows compassions to him only who surrenders himself entirely to Him.⁵⁵

DEVOTION AND KNOWLEDGE

Devotion leads to wisdom. It dispels all doubts. Hari, the Supreme Deity, resides in the hearts of those

who have succeeded in dispelling all doubts. Madhava never resides in the hearts of those who are tossed by doubts and would dispute away everything with the help of false dialectics⁵⁶. Narayana is the source of all kinds of knowledge. He is the end of all knowledge. "As waves of the ocean, rising from the ocean, rush away from it only to return to it in the end, even so diverse kinds of knowledge, springing from Narayana, return to Narayana in the end."⁵⁷ By constantly meditating on Narayana and devoting his whole soul to Him, a person acquires great wisdom.⁵⁸ Wisdom can be attained only through the grace of God. The person upon whom Narayana looks with compassion succeeds in becoming enlightened. No one can attain wisdom or enlightenment through his own wishes.⁵⁹ The inhabitants of the white island (Svetadvipa) were entirely devoted to Narayana. They were always engaged in worshipping the great Deity who always sported with them. All of them were of enlightened souls endowed as they were with true knowledge.⁶⁰ Thus devotion leads to enlightenment. No one can achieve wisdom by his own efforts. God is the source of all knowledge. He grants the gift of knowledge only to him who is entirely devoted to Him. Knowledge cannot be attained without devotion, and the grace of God.

THE GRACE OF GOD

The Mahabharata teaches the doctrine of grace. No one can comprehend the religion of devotion merely with the help of the intellect. Even if he were to strive for a hundred

⁵³ *Ibid.*, xii, 349, 2-4 & *Nilakanthi Tika* & xii, 349, 66 & 57. ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, xii, 349, 68-70.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, xii, 349, 68-79. ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, xii, 350, 70;

cf. Narada Sutra. ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, xii, 346, 89; E. T., p. 852. ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, xii, 349, 71. ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, xii, 349, 75-76. ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, xii, 344, 52.

years, he would never be able to comprehend it with the science of argumentation. Without the grace of Narayana, or an accession of high knowledge consequent on His grace, no one can understand the religion of devotion.⁶¹ Even the incorporeal denizens of heaven bow to the Supreme Deity, and through His grace realise their ends which He ordains for them.⁶² The Brahmacharin, the householder, the ascetic, and the Yati—all worship Him with devotion. "It is He who speedily moved to grace, confers on them high ends fraught with felicity."⁶³ Those persons in the world, who, filled with His spirit, devote themselves whole-heartedly to Him, attain higher ends, and succeed in entering Him and residing in Him.⁶⁴ Only those can see Him to whom He becomes gracious.⁶⁵ Narada could see Narayana, the Supreme Lord, in the white island only through His grace.⁶⁶ Hari confers His grace only on those persons who are devoted to Him with their whole souls. He accepts all worship that is offered to Him according to the ordinance.⁶⁷ Emancipation entirely depends upon Narayana.⁶⁸ The person upon whom Narayana bestows His grace can attain higher wisdom. He alone can shake off all desires and is awakened from the slumber of ignorance.⁶⁹ He is the giver of boons. He is the giver of wealth, prosperity and happiness. He is the grantor of every wish.⁷⁰ He gives us strength to restrain our senses. He gives us power to undergo penances and observe vows. He gives us the

power of reasoning correctly. He gives us the power of concentrating our minds on Him. He purges us of all evils and impurities and gives us the highest wisdom. He gives us emancipation. He gives us devotion and love for Him. He enables us to enter into Him through His infinite grace. He communicates to us His infinite bliss and love. He comes down to us and enthrones Himself in our hearts through His grace, and lifts us up to the Divine plane and locks us up in His loving embrace. Through His infinite grace He enlightens us, sanctifies us, consecrates us and attunes us completely to Him. Nothing depends upon us. Everything depends upon Him.⁷¹

THE CULT OF DEVOTION IS

THE BEST OF ALL

God is always fond of those who are devoted to Him. No one is dearer to Him in the three worlds than those persons who are enlightened and possessed of high souls. Dearer even than those persons are those who are entirely devoted to Him. Whatever rites and religious acts are performed by them are all received by God with love and reverence. He is ever affectionate to His devotees.⁷² There exists no one in the universe that is dearer to Him than one who adores Him with devotion.⁷³ It is undoubted that the religion of devotion is superior to that of knowledge and is very dear to God.⁷⁴ Let us, then, all love God with all our hearts, give ourselves up to Him entirely, and share His infinite love, bliss and sweetness.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* xii, 335, 6. ⁶² *Ibid.* xii, 335, 38.
⁶³ *Ibid.* xii, 335, 42; E.T., p. 743; cf. *Narada Sutra*. ⁶⁴ *Ibid.* xii, 335, 43; cf. *Gita*. ⁶⁵ *Ibid.* xii, 337, 30. ⁶⁶ *Ibid.* xii, 344, 24. ⁶⁷ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 1. ⁶⁸ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 70. ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

xii, 349, 75 & *Nīlakanthi Tika*. ⁷⁰ *Ibid.* xvi, 349, 4. ⁷¹ *Ibid.* xii, 339, 1-4; xii, 340, 12-13, 14. ⁷² *Ibid.* xii, 344, 53-54, 62-63. ⁷³ *Ibid.* xii, 345, 8. ⁷⁴ *Ibid.* xii, 349, 4.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

SUTRAS 34 TO 42

Introduction

The discussion on Para Bhakti or the Supreme spiritual realisation comes to an end with the last Sutra. The remaining portion of the treatise is devoted to a consideration of the means by which this highest realisation becomes possible to us. We have already seen how the various faculties of the mind should co-operate with one another before the natural perfection of the human soul can manifest itself. Spiritual Sadhana or practice has thus reference to the culture of these various faculties. The Bhakti Sastra is, however, concerned only with the culture and purification of emotions, and the culture of the other functions comes in only in so far as they are necessary and helpful to the culture and purification of the emotions. Narada, therefore, takes up only the emotional side of Sadhana for treatment. According to him, the culture and purification of the emotions is done through a kind of love towards God, and this love for God, which is a *means*, is known as Aparā Bhakti as distinguished from Para Bhakti or Supreme love which, being the end, has been identified with the highest spiritual realisation. In the Bhakti Sastra, all self-effort is directed towards achieving this lower love or Aparā Bhakti, which is the only direct means of Para Bhakti.

In the next nine Sūtras, Narada discusses the positive and negative aspects of spiritual practice in their relation to Divine grace.

The thirty-fourth Sūtra forms an introduction to the whole of the ensuing discussion. Narada does not want to base his teaching solely on his own individual experience, for he is conscious that however much he may have been personally helped by particular practices, these need not necessarily be helpful to all, owing to differences in circumstances and environment—physical, temperamental or social. He therefore proposes to deal with only the universal elements of spiritual practice that have been accepted as necessary and unavoidable by all the teachers of the Bhakti School. He puts his own experiments and experiences to the test, as it were, in the light of the experiences of others, and thus separates the grain from the chaff. His teaching which follows, therefore, must be taken to be the essence of all Bhakti Sadhana, being broad-based on the consensus of opinion of experts in the line. It steers clear of everything that smacks of sectarianism. One may, therefore, safely adopt him as a safe guide, whatever may be the sect or denomination one may belong to by birth or persuasion. If on the other hand, any of the teachings of a particular sect goes against these essential and universal principles enunciated here-

under, these are to be rejected, as being injurious to the end in view. Difference in opinion is pardonable when it is with reference to the highest realisation which in itself is indescribable. *Vide* Sutra 15 where Narada discusses them. But here, in the sphere of *Apara Bhakti*, the means described are all capable of being scrutinised by the discriminating intellect, and it is easy to find out the essence. There is no room therefore for differences of opinion here, and Narada proposes to give only such of the means as are essential and universal, as advocated by all the writers on *Bhakti*.

तस्याः साधनानि गायन्त्याचार्याः ॥ ३४ ॥

तस्याः of that (*Para Bhakti*)
साधनानि means आचार्याः teachers
गायन्ति sing.

34. Teachers sing of the following as the means of spiritual realisation.

Notes. 1. *Teachers*—They are those who have had first-hand experience of the upward struggle and the consequent realisation, and who out of infinite mercy, feels for the miseries of the world, and stretch out a helping hand to those who have not yet dared to begin the ascent. These should be carefully distinguished from writers on religion and religious practices, like the modern psychologists of religion, who have had no first-hand experience of this struggle or realisation, but who study these only objectively as found in other persons. Such writers are not safe guides. This is the force of the word *Acharya*, which comes from '*Achar*', which means 'to practise'.

2. *Sing*—The word sing is used to suggest the idea of joy which accom-

panies the serving of others spiritually. The real teachers teach because they experience a celestial joy in helping others.

As noted by Sri Sankara in his commentary on *Gita* II:55, all spiritual practice consists in putting forth the necessary effort to develop in oneself those characteristics which are always present in a realised man. These characteristics may be roughly classified into two groups: 1. Absence of the evils of *Samsara* and 2. Presence of a divine bliss. A spiritual aspirant must necessarily, therefore, use his will to cultivate these two. He should reject everything that subjects him to the bondage of *Samsara* and acquire the bliss of a divine life. Thus spiritual practice takes two forms—one negative, and the other positive. In fact these two are parts of one and the same *Sadhana*—the obverse and reverse of the same coin. The seed must lose itself or allow itself to be destroyed before it can develop into a tree. Spiritual life too is a slow growth, and growth involves a giving up of the lower stages for higher ones, the two forming part of one process. Some emphasise the negative aspect, while others give preference to the positive. The former argue that if one cuts asunder the fetters that bind, nothing more is necessary to give freedom; when the obstructing bund is removed, the water flows of its own accord without any separate effort. The latter argue that even fetters can be broken only with the help of a sword or an axe, and so the attempt should be directed to using the axe; darkness can vanish only in the presence of light, and the attempt therefore must be to light a lamp.

and not to drive away the darkness. Each is right from his own standpoint, but to emphasise the one at the expense of the other is risky. Thus in the name of negative practice, one is likely to run to excess in the direction of asceticism and be dead to all the noble feelings which are helpful to the achievement of the goal. So also, in the name of positive practice, one may get oneself entangled irredeemably in the worldly life and may not care for renunciation at all. Both these dangers are to be avoided by a happy combination of the two. Our Acharyas have therefore taken care to emphasise both the aspects in their proper pro-

portions. It is possible for a man to renounce the world on the sole ground that it is full of evil and miseries. He need not have any conception of the possibility of a higher happiness. But it is only when this renunciation is coupled with a knowledge and faith in the possibility of this higher bliss that Sadhana becomes easily fruitful. Renunciation and communion (Tyaga and Bhajana), dispassion and practice (Vairagya and Abhyasa), thus form the corner stones of all spiritual practice.

So in the 35th Sutra, Narada presents to us the essence of the negative aspect of spiritual practice, *viz.*, renunciation.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Thoughts from the Eternal Law: By R. Krishnaswami Aiyar, Advocate, Tinnevely. Printed at the Madras Law Journal Press, Mylapore, Madras. Pages 135. Price Re. 1.

This is a clear analysis, and in many respects an intelligent presentation, of the fundamental principles of Hinduism, which Mr. Aiyar rightly prefers to describe by the name of Sanatana Dharma or Eternal Law than by the other more common but meaningless epithet. The teachings of the Indian sages lie scattered in an extensive religious literature, and emphasise and elaborate different points of philosophy, theology, ritual and social practices that are often difficult to reconcile. That Mr. Aiyar has, however, been able to give a clear and synthetic presentation of these doctrines of the *Sruties*, *Smrities*, *Puranas* and ritualistic books in a small book of this kind, does much credit to the author's erudition and grasp of essential principles. A student or teacher of Hindu religion will find it, on the whole, a good book for consultation.

Two excellent features of the book must be specially alluded to here. Mr.

Aiyar does not approach Hindu thought as merely a dogmatic theology or a dry metaphysics, but as a scheme of beliefs and practices devised for the evolution, or rather the gradual expression, of the spiritual principle in man. Again he rightly emphasises that, in this scheme, the question of competency is of the greatest importance if the doctrines and practices inculcated by the sages are to be of real use in their application to life. In other words, a man's concern now is not with the highest truth, but with the phase of it that stands as the immediately next stage of evolution accessible to him. The failure to grasp this point is the reason why we have in our midst to-day so many philosophers and theologians who can give eloquent disquisitions on the most abstruse doctrines of Vedanta, but who are at the same time devoid of any standard of honesty, justice and decency in matters of everyday life.

There are, however, certain views expressed in the book with which we cannot agree and which the author could very well have avoided introducing in this book, on account of their highly controver-

sial nature. For example, he is violently opposed to hotels and the practice of selling food, and in justification of this view, attributes the physical degeneration of Indians to these. But curiously enough, he forgets that there are countries outside India where hotel-keeping is practised much more extensively than here, without, however, any prejudice to the health of the people. In fact what is wanted in India is not the disappearance of hotels, but an effective supervision of them. In themselves the hotels are highly necessary in these days of rapid communication and industrialisation, and without them men, who for the sake of their work have to live separated from their families or have to be constantly on the move, will be put to great inconvenience. Besides, hotels afford a useful avenue of employment to many men.

Still more contentious is his view on marriage. The wife's will, he contends, should be dependent on the husband's. This can be achieved only if the girl is married before she develops a self-will. Self-will normally develops at the age of seven or eight. "So at about that age the child, if a boy, is committed to the care of a teacher who can train him up in right conduct and, if a girl, is committed to the care of a husband who takes up the responsibility of training and maintaining her in right conduct." Apart from the question whether matrimony can ever be a substitute for education in the case of girls, one may question if any person has the right to break the will of another or impair its natural growth, unless it be in the relation between master and slave. Then, again, it is doubtful whether the Hindu ideal of the wife as *Sahadharma-charini*, 'companion in righteous living', can ever be fulfilled by a poor creature who is not allowed to develop a will of its own; for, true companionship can be found only between equals and not between one with a will and another without it.

One feels that Mr. Aiyar reaches the summit of reactionary spirit when he pleads vigorously in favour of the practice of untouchability. In connection with this, he diverts a little from his main topic, in order to have a dig at 'M. K. Gandhi' for leading the movement against untouch-

ability, because he does not know Sanskrit and is therefore not aware of what the Sastras say. But Mr. Aiyar ignores that if Mr. Gandhi does not know Sanskrit, he has at least the help of many sound Sanskrit scholars. Then again, should one necessarily be a Sanskrit Pandit in order to understand the spirit of the Sastras? He justifies the practice of untouchability on the ground that, space being matter in contact with bodies, 'the amount of space we maintain about our body with reference to particular people' has a bearing on our character. That there is no caste prejudice and ill-will behind the practice, Mr. Aiyar tries to prove by referring to the practice of segregating women in Hindu families under certain conditions. While this custom has some hygienic justification undoubtedly, it is open to question whether it has any spiritual efficacy. But the custom of untouchability, as practised in Hindu society today, has not even much of hygienic justification and absolutely none on spiritual grounds. What one is pained to notice in all this discussion of Mr. Aiyar is that he entirely fails to see how the practice of untouchability, whatever its theory in the Sastras, has actually kept millions of Indians in degradation from generation to generation, while the flame of the brightest culture that man has ever evolved was burning in their neighbourhood. Quoting Sastras and indulging in subtle metaphysical justifications based on questionable premises are never going to satisfy men who feel the tragedy of this situation keenly.

Barring some of the views expressed on social questions, we have nothing but praise for the book.

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Srutikalpalatika : By Waman Pandit. (Sanskrit). Published by Tukaram Pundalik Shetye, Madarvog, Bombay. Pp. 268. Price 3-5-0.

The *Srutikalpalatika* is an elaborate commentary in 38 chapters of beautiful Sanskrit prose, from the pen of Waman Pandit, the famous Maharashtra scholar and poet of the 16th century, on the well-known *Sruti Gita*, an epitome of Vedanta, which forms the 87th chapter of the Xth Skandha of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. The *Sruti Gita* pur-

ports to be a hymn sung by the Vedas in praise of Brahman to awaken Him from his sleep for starting creation. It is an abstruse treatise and naturally there have been innumerable commentaries on the same by scholars of various schools of Vedanta. Among such known commentaries are the Sridharee, Chitsukhee Shankaree, Shuhrdaya, Praharshinee, Vijayadhwaja etc. The present commentary expounds the philosophy of Wamana, the main principle of which is said to be 'Knowledge of the unqualified and devotion to the qualified'. Any new commentary on this

abstruse text must be welcome to all students of Vedanta ; much more so when it comes from such a renowned scholar as Wamana. The author commands a beautiful style and his exposition is supported by profuse quotations from the Shastras. In fact there is no authoritative scripture which he has not laid under contribution in the preparation of the commentary. The publishers deserve the thanks of all lovers of Vedanta and Sanskrit literature for bringing out an edition of this rare manuscript which sees the light for the first time.

NEWS AND REPORTS

A Correction

In the August and September issues of the *Vedanta Kesari*, we published an article entitled 'The Spiritual Outlook in the West' by Gaston de Mengel. We have come to learn from a Western reader that it is an unfair attack on some of the countries of the West, and that it is, therefore, in many respects offensive to the sentiments of people there. We regret to have given occasion for such misunderstanding, and now hasten to add that the views expressed therein are entirely the writer's and do not in any way reflect the ideas of the *Vedanta Kesari* or of the Movement, the ideas of which it reflects. Swami Vivekananda the founder of the Ramakrishna Movement, had deep regard for the Western culture, and was of opinion that India has to learn many things of great value from it. Especially with regard to French culture, he has given a glowing picture in his works (*vide* Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda. Vol. V, Pp. 360 and 409-420). Besides the inestimable contributions of the West to Science, organisation, politics, literature, fine arts, etc., it has also given to the world some of its greatest mystics and God-men. Our readers would remember that the *Vedanta Kesari* has been showing appreciation of the

spiritual heritage of the West by publishing a series of articles on Western mystics by W. H. Koch.

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Ramakrishna Mission Flood Relief Work 6th Weekly Report

In the week ending with 2nd September, 90 mds. of rice were distributed among 2451 recipients belonging to 39 villages in unions Raghunathpur, Ulpur and Satkira from the Ramakrishna Mission Relief centres at Nijra and Silna in the Gopalganj subdivision of the Faridpur District. The situation continues to be critical. The water which has been rising all along has invaded nearly 95% of the houses. The poor, helpless people come in boats to receive the doles of rice. A few villages in Dumuria union are also being enlisted. We require at least Rs. 500 per week for continuing the relief. Our Malda centre has been doing relief on a small scale. The success of the work depends entirely on the sympathy and co-operation of the charitable public. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by (1) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P.O. Dt., Howrah. (2) The President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Mylapore, Madras.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXV]

NOVEMBER, 1938

[No. 7

MAHASAMADHI

At 8-40 a.m. Sunday the twenty-third October, His Holiness Srmat Swami Suddhanandaji Maharaj, the fifth President of the Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, has passed away in his sixty-seventh year, casting a gloom of profound sorrow on the minds of the members, friends and well-wishers of the organisation to which he belonged for over forty years and which he served with true self-dedication all through that long period.

As a beloved disciple of the great Swami Vivekananda, Swami Suddhananda had a remarkable spiritual training under him for over six years in his youth. The Swami was a keen student of religion throughout his life and an untiring teacher full of love and sympathy, whose calm influence was a constant factor in the moulding of the character of younger monastic members of the Order. His literary labours bore fruit in the form of valuable religious writings including the classical translation of the important works of Swami Vivekananda into Bengali. From 1927 to 1938 he bore the office of the Secretary of the Mission, and for the following six months nearly he was the President of the Mission and the Order. Almost the whole of his monastic career was spent at the Balur Math, taking a lively part in all the activities calculated to further the spiritual ideals of the Mission. May his ideal spirit of holiness and service, which is but a ray inseparable from the splendour of the Great Master, ever continue to cheer the pilgrims that tread the selfsame path.

Oin Santih ! Santih ! Santih .



SPIRITUAL LIFE: THE LAWS OF ITS GROWTH—I

[In this and the ensuing issues for the year, we shall publish a series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna's views on the fundamental problems of spiritual life, based on his recorded sayings. In the course of these studies we shall also have occasion to take a passing view of many questions of absorbing interest in modern life and thought. 'Spiritual Life: The Laws of Its Growth—I' is the seventh of the series.]

THE Master's teachings with regard to the nature of man and the state of bondage are not primarily meant to be a structure of thought for the satisfaction of the academic mind. They are, on the other hand, based on the aspirations and experiences of the spiritually-minded, and their primary aim is to help man to rise above his present limitations and realise the higher nature latent in himself. This higher realisation is possible only through spiritual disciplines; but these disciplines in their turn have a significance only for minds that have passed through the long process of purification and ethical culture culminating in an intense longing for the Lord. Hence in the Master's instructions, besides the various sayings of deep philosophical significance, we also come across many teachings on ethics, social life and preparatory disciplines, which have a bearing on the production of an intense longing for God in the minds of the aspirants. We shall attempt a survey of these teachings below. They may appear somewhat disjointed, but the unity of their purport would become clear if it is recognised that by practising them alone can the longing for the Divine be established in the heart of man.

I

A common question that confronts a spiritual aspirant is how far external

observances, rituals and socio-religious rules are really connected with spiritual growth. According to the Master, they are related as husk is with the grain within. Though the husk does not become the plant, yet if the seed is to sprout at all, it should not at first be separated from the grain. Rituals and external observances do not constitute spirituality, and they fall off in the fullness of time. But for the beginner their protective and educative influence is highly necessary. For example, dress has a great influence on thought. European dress makes one behave like a Sahib. If a person dresses himself like a top, he will be humming love songs. In the same way the ochre robe of the Sannyasin brings sacred thoughts to the mind of a sincere aspirant. Food too has an influence on the mind. It is good to observe such rules in the matter of the quality and acceptance of it as are not prejudicial to the growth of mental purity. A man who is following the path of Jnana is not much affected by food; but a Bhakta has to discriminate in this matter and should eat only such food as he can freely offer to his Lord. "At the same time," says the Master. "I must say that if a man loves God even while living upon the flesh of the pig, he is blessed; and wretched is he who lives on milk and rice but is absorbed in 'woman and gold'."

A large number of caste-rules observed in India and several principles of social etiquette followed in other advanced societies are meant to be safe-guards in the early stages of one's spiritual life. When a man has grown spiritually, he naturally transcends these rules, but there is no use of prematurely brushing them aside to assume an air of spiritual superiority. Such men are like immature mangoes artificially made ripe.

This should not, however, be taken to mean that the Master was a social reactionary, and could not appreciate the point of view of those men who discarded outworn social conventions from genuine spiritual motives. For he says: "People of this age care for the essence of everything. They will accept the essentials of religion and not its non-essentials. Those who take fish do not want the useless head and tail of fish, but only the soft middle portion of it; so the ancient rules and commandments of our scriptures must be pruned and purged of all their accretions to make them suit the needs of our modern times."

Among other external observances helpful for the growth of devotion, the institutions of image-worship and pilgrimage occupy an important place. Just as a man learns to write by drawing big scrawls at first, so an aspirant must acquire the power of mental concentration by fixing the mind on forms and images. Again, in the case of one who is truly devoted, the Divine image creates a vivid consciousness of God, just as the toy fruit and a toy elephant remind one of the real fruit and the living animal. It was the Master's conviction that for many people image worship is absolutely necessary for spiritual growth. And

to those who have conscientious objection to the practice of image worship, the Master says: "Even if there is anything wrong in image worship, does He not know that all worship is meant for Him? He will surely be pleased to accept the worship, knowing that it is meant for Him alone. Love God. That is the duty nearest to you."

As for pilgrimage, while the Master recognised its value to the fullest extent, his attitude towards it was tinged with a spirit of criticism. The milk of the cow, says he, pervades the whole body of the animal through its blood stream; but one can milk it only from its teats. In the same way, though God pervades everything, His manifestation is felt more clearly in sacred temples and places of pilgrimage sanctified by the fervour and devotion of innumerable devotees. For in such places spiritual ideas are present in a solidified form, as it were, and sincere men are likely to have spiritual awakening more easily there than in other places.

But the Master was not blind to the worldly influences rampant in those places. When he went to Benares with Mathur Babu, he saw the people there as well as the pilgrims indulging in the same type of worldly talks as in other places, and so he remarked to his cousin and attendant Hriday: "What have we come to see here. Things are just the same here as well as there, with but one point of difference, that the inhabitants of these places seem to have better digestive power."

According to the Master, even places of pilgrimage can help only those who have a spark of devotion within, and accordingly a favourite

maxim of his was, "He who has got it (spirituality) here (i.e., within), finds it there (in holy places) also." Another instruction of his to those who go on pilgrimage with genuine spiritual intentions is this: "As cows, after eating their fill, lie down quietly at a place and chew the cud, so after visiting a sacred spot or a place of pilgrimage, you must sit down in a solitary spot and ruminate over the holy thoughts, until you got immersed in them. You must not devote yourselves to sense pursuits and drive away the higher ideas from your mind immediately after you turn away from those places."

II

The Master warns every spiritual aspirant against the snare of occult powers. Those who set their mind on occult powers get stuck to them, and do not rise to higher levels of spirituality. Occult powers are trivial. After fourteen years of austerities a man acquires the power of crossing a river on foot. He could as well have done this by paying a few pice to the ferry-man. It is dangerous too to have occult powers. Men who are not possessed of control over the senses are sure to misuse them. The Master cites the example of a man who had the power of going about invisible with the magical power of an amulet. Later on the man used his power in an illicit love affair, and became a fallen soul.

It is also foolish for a spiritual aspirant to go after occult powers. To pray to God for such powers is like a man going to a king and begging for a pumpkin.

III

Another obstacle in the way of spiritual aspirants is a narrow and fanatical outlook. According to the Master a religious fanatic is worse than a dog. A dog recognises his Master in any garb, but a fanatic fails to recognise his God when He is presented in terms and concepts that are not familiar to Him. For, according to the Master, all religions invoke the same Sacchidananda, be it by the name of Allah, God, Hari, or Brahman, just as the same substance is meant though called by different names as 'water', 'vaari', 'aqua' or 'pani'. Every religion is a path to God as the different ghats of a tank leading to the same water. As the one reservoir supplies gas to the gas-lamps in different localities, the same God illumines the religions and religious teachers of different times and climes. Fanaticism is therefore due to ignorance regarding the nature of the Deity or due only to a partial knowledge of Him. It is like blind men quarrelling about the form of the elephant after knowing it only by touching the tusk, trunk, leg and ear of the animal; or it is like children disputing about the colour of the chameleon without knowing that the chameleon changes colour every now and then. The right attitude for an aspirant is therefore not to dispute about the truth of the different religions, but to follow his own faith while showing due respect to those of others at the same time. "Look at the young daughter-in-law in a Hindu joint-family," says the Master, "she respects her father-in-law, mother-in-law, and others in the family, obeys them, and ministers to their wants;

but at the same time she loves her husband in a way quite different from her love for others. In the same way, be firm in your faith towards the particular form of the Deity you adore, but do not despise those of others. Honour them too; for they all represent one authority and one Love."

IV

Next we may make a passing review of a group of moral virtues that the Master recommends for spiritual aspirants. Alms and charities, especially when given to fit recipients, are conducive to spiritual life. Works of service should not, however, be done in an egotistic spirit or in a condescending demeanour. A spiritual man must bear in mind that God dwells even in the meanest of the mean, and when he serves anyone, he must offer that service in all humility as an act of worship to the indwelling Divinity.

A spiritual aspirant should cultivate forbearance. Look at the anvil of the blacksmith—how it is hammered and beaten but yet moves not from its place. Let men learn endurance and patience from it.

A spiritual aspirant should be reticent. He must keep his faith and sentiments to himself, and as far as possible he must do his devotional practices in private, unseen by others.

He should never be conceited; for humility is the true sign of wisdom. Look at the tree laden with fruits; it bends low. So is a truly spiritual man, lowly and meek. But meekness does not mean want of self-respect. For no humility is humility that humiliates the self, and no pride is pride that expresses the glory of the Self.

A true aspirant must be simple-minded. For then spiritual instructions easily fructify in him, as seeds germinate and bear fruit quickly when sown in tilled soil free from stones. Only by virtue of much penance people become simple-minded; and to the simple-minded alone God reveals His own nature. But along with such instructions the Master would also warn his disciples: "You are to be devotees, but not simpletons on that account."

A devotee should not neglect his family. There are so many debts that one has to repay—the debt to the Gods, the debt to the Rishis and also the debt to the parents and the wife. Father and mother are of prime importance to man, and unless they are pleased no devotional practice will be of any avail. Even Lord Chaitanya took care to see that he did not wound his mother's feelings when he took Sannyasa. The parents should be served to one's best capacity during their life-time, and after their death, their post-funeral rites should be performed according to one's means. Wife and children have to be provided for, at least with bare subsistence. Under one condition, however, a devotee is free from all obligations. That is when he becomes mad with love of God. "Then who is father, who is mother, and who is wife? He loves God so deeply that he becomes mad. He has no duty, he is absolved from all debts. When a man reaches that state, he forgets the whole world; he becomes unconscious of even the body which is so dear to everyone."

An aspirant must wean himself from extreme attachment to the body. As to how this is to be done, the

Master says: "The human frame is made up of decaying matter. It is a collection of flesh, bones, marrow, blood and other unclean substances subject to putrification. By practising such analysis of the body constantly, one's love of it vanishes." Though a devotee should thus have a vivid consciousness of the worthlessness and transitoriness of the body, he must take care of it in order that it may be in a fit condition for practising spiritual disciplines. He must bear illness and other sufferings of the body patiently. They are the taxes which the soul has to pay for the use of the body, as the tenant pays house-rent for the use of the house. Besides, sufferings often have a chastening effect on the mind of man. As the iron must be heated and hammered again and again before it becomes steel, the ordinary man has to be put in the furnace of tribulation and hammered with the persecutions of the world before he becomes pure and humble, and fit to enter the presence of the Lord.

A sincere aspirant should do his utmost to overcome the bondage of the senses and the desires pertaining to them. For he alone is a true man who is dead even in this life, that is, whose passions and propensities have been annihilated as in a dead body. As to how these passions like lust and anger can be conquered, the Master says: "So long as these passions are directed towards the world and its objects, they behave as enemies. But when they are directed towards God, they become the best friends of man; for then they lead him to God. The lust for the things of the world must be changed into a hankering for God; the anger that

man feels in relation to others should be turned towards God for His not manifesting Himself to him. One should deal with all the passions in the same manner. These passions cannot be eradicated, but they can be educated." For those who have not already attained perfection, it will also be necessary to keep aloof from objects of temptation as far as possible.

Two virtues on which the Master insists uncompromisingly are truth and Brahmacharya (continence). Spiritual striving is the quest after God who is the soul of truth, and as such, unless one speaks the truth in all matters, one cannot progress in it at all. Through truth one can realise God, and truthfulness, according to the Master, is the Tapasya (austerity) of the age of Kali. According to him even the wearing of a false garb is bad. For if the mind is not in accord with the garb, one grows hypocritical and all fear of doing wrong and uttering falsehood gradually disappears. Spiritual ruin is the sure consequence of it. The great task of spiritual life is to make thought word and action tally.

Equally important is Brahmacharya or continence. Sexuality discolours one's mind and dissipates one's energies. Thus in one who indulges in sex the mind is unfit to reflect the Divine, and his emotions being drained off through fleshly indulgences, his mind lacks in the vigour needed for the steep ascent of the spirit. That is why Sannyasa, requiring absolute celibacy, is recommended for those who aspire after the higher achievements of spiritual life. Even in the case of beginners who are not capable of practising this

difficult disciple, some kind of regulation and disciplining of sex life is necessary if any progress is to be made in the spiritual life.

V

All these mental and moral training that a spiritual aspirant undergoes is to build a secure foundation for the edifice of devotional life. Hence prayer and cultivation of devotion are of utmost importance in the Master's teachings. Addressing the devotees, the Master says, "God is extremely attentive, my boys. He has heard every time you have prayed to Him. He will surely reveal Himself to you some day or other, at least at the time of death." Man need not postpone cultivating the habit of prayer till he arrives at settled conviction about the nature of God. If one cannot settle whether

God has form or not, the Master advises one to pray: "O Lord, I cannot understand whether Thou art with form or without it. Whatever Thou mayest be, have mercy on me. Do Thou reveal Thyself unto me." One may even attribute the various forms and aspects of God current in society to imagination and have no faith in them. Yet God will shower His grace on a person if he believes in a Divine Power that creates and directs the world, and prays with a distressed heart, "O God, I do not know Thy real nature. Deign to reveal Thyself to me as Thou art." If the spirit of devotion is thus cultured, there is little danger for an aspirant. The ship of life steers clear of every danger, if the mind, its compass needle, is always turned towards God without oscillation.

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

By A Devotee

[Swami Shivananda, otherwise known as Mahapurush Maharaj, was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the second president of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In his life time he had travelled extensively all over India, and was responsible for quickening the spiritual life of innumerable men. These conversations are pages from the diaries of his disciples, and contain many of the precious instructions imparted by him to spiritual aspirants.]

IT was a Sunday afternoon, when a large number of devotees had assembled in Mahapurushji's room. He was enquiring about the welfare of some and was giving replies to the questions of others. It seemed, all the time, that his mind was completely in-drawn. At about 3 p.m. a group of devotees, who had returned from a visit to Dakshineswar, enter-

ed Sri Mahapurushji's room. The Swami was delighted to see them and asked, "Well, where are you all coming from?"

They took their seats after salutations with all reverence. One of them said, "To-day we had been to Dakshineswar; we have worshipped Gods in different Shrines and have taken the consecrated food of Mother Kali

there. The day has been very delightfully spent. As we visited Master's room, the Panchavati, the Bilva tree, etc., the mind turned on the different modes of Sadhana which Sri Ramakrishna practised for so many years.

Mahapurushji: Oh yes, that is indeed true. The Master lived there for a period of about thirty years and practised, in those very place, the different types of Sadhanas, accompanied by constant divine ecstasies and lofty spiritual experiences. The room in which he lived is not an ordinary place. To my mind Dakshineswar is as sacred as Benares. It is nothing short of it. I cannot view it in any other way. My salutation to the Master is offered from this place as it is not possible for me to go there always. Can you find any other place equal to this? As Benares is supra-mundane, so is Dakshineswar.

Devotee: Maharaj, we are having a great desire of learning from you about your stay at the Cossipore garden-house, and also the early history of the starting of the Math by Swamiji.

Mahapurush Maharaj kept silent for a while, as if he was attempting to bring his mind down to the ordinary plane of consciousness. Then he began to speak in a low voice: "When the disease of the Master's throat reached an acute stage, he was brought to the Cossipore garden-house for better treatment and nursing. We all joined to render service to him. Afterwards the Master passed away in that place."

Devotee: Could you ascertain that the Master had actually left the body?

Maharaj: No. At first none of us could apprehend that. We thought

the Master had passed into the super-conscious state, because it would sometimes so happen that he would remain absorbed in Samadhi even for two or three days consecutively. So thinking him to be in Samadhi we uttered the Names of Gods and Goddesses to call him back to his ordinary consciousness. Thus the whole night passed away in this condition; no improvement was perceptible. Next day Dr. Mahendra Nath Sarkar was called for. After examining the Master minutely the doctor declared that he had passed away. He found no vestige of life left in the body. The doctor advised us to photograph him which we did, accordingly. Then at about 2 or 2-30 p.m., the last rite was gone through at the Cossipore burning Ghat.

Devotee: You had then to pass your days in stress and strain?

Maharaj: Not at all. We felt nothing of it. We were spending our days with one definite purpose. We were all so much engrossed in the service of the Master and in meditation and austerities that days and nights passed without our being conscious of it. That was a unique period of our life. After Master's passing away, all, except Latu and myself, went back to their respective homes. Swamiji also did the same, but he used to come every day and take care of us. The sacred remains of Sri Ramakrishna's body were in that Cossipore garden-house because the period of lease did not lapse as yet. Once Swamiji and others conferred together and decided to take the remains somewhere on the banks of the Ganges, because the Master had desired so. But a suitable place could not be had. On the other hand, Ram

Babu and others were making preparations to take them to Kankurgachi. We were pained to think of it, particularly at the thought that the last wishes of the Master would not be redeemed. We informed Balaram Babu to come with an earthen vessel. He hurried to us on information. That very night we sifted the bones from the ashes, sealed them up in that vessel with mud, and despatched the sacred vessel to Balaram Babu's house. As daily worship was in vogue in that house, these sacred remains were also regularly worshipped there. Ram Babu, in the meantime, took the remaining ashes and bones to Kankurgachi. We did not disclose what we had been doing; he could also scent nothing. Those sacred remains are being worshipped at the Math now. Swamiji took them over to the Math premises on his head. He would name the casket containing the sacred remains as 'Casket of Atmarama'. We also do the same.

Devotee: Had you any vision of the Master after he left the mortal world?

Mahapurushji: Holy Mother had a vision of Sri Ramakrishna after going to Brindavan. I also repaired to Brindavan. Latu and someone else were at Cossipore. Swamiji used to come to Balaram Babu's house and would discuss about the ways and means of starting an organisation which would knit all of us together by a common purpose. It happened thus: One day Suresh Babu came to Swamiji and said, "O Brother Naren, Sri Ramakrishna appeared before me last night and told, 'My children are left forlorn here and there, what have you done for them?'

I am in great mental agony since I saw that vision. See what would be done; I have full consent to your decision." Swamiji was overjoyed to find his ardent desire attaining fulfilment in an uncalculated manner. He remarked, "I am also thinking about the same matter for the last few days. That has happily come about. At the very start it is advisable to hire a house. What do you think of it?" Suresh Babu readily agreed. After some search a two-storied house was rented for Rupees ten per month at Baranagore. The house was a dilapidated one; people of the neighbourhood would call it 'Haunted house'. Visitors would fear to tread its grounds. However we all occupied that house. By this time I returned from Brindaban. Finding me again Swamiji said, "Tarakda, you have come; it is all for the best. I was also thinking of your arrival. We have rented a house; come and live there." We began to live there. At that time we were seized with a spirit of strong dispassion. Days were spent in austerities, worship and recital of sacred scriptures. These would go on unabated, day in and day out. We would not feel the pinch of hunger and thirst. Devotional songs and Kirtana would be going on very often. At times we participated in Puja and ecstatic dance. At such occasions the door-keeper on the ground floor would fear the collapse of the roof. Amidst spiritual joy and delight we passed our days at that time. Thus you can understand how the corner-stone of our organisation was laid amidst this scene of renunciation, penances and austerities.



REPETITION OF DIVINE NAME

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, formerly Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is at present preaching the message of Vedanta in different countries of Central Europe. We are publishing in the *Vedanta Kesari* for the past few months notes of his class talks at Wiesbaden, Germany. The present instalment, which forms the sixth, throws some light on the practice of Japa.]

I

FAITH is most essential before taking up Japa or repetition of Divine Name. It does not matter even if it becomes mechanical to some extent. The beginner will find that his centre of consciousness is continually shifting, going up or coming down. This is a most difficult situation for all aspirants. You must never allow yourselves to get into a drowsy state during your attempts at meditation or during Japa. This is most dangerous. Sleep, drowsiness, and meditation should never be connected in any way. If you feel very drowsy while you are doing Japa, just get up and pace the room till this drowsiness leaves you.

In the beginner there are mostly two states of mind. In one the mind becomes awfully restless, in the other it falls down to the subliminal plane. Both are to be avoided if you want to make some real progress.

When the mind is awfully restless and out-going, you should doggedly persist in your Japa, even do it mechanically, without giving way to this restlessness. In that way part of your mind is always engaged in Japa. Thus the whole mind cannot become or remain restless.

The other state, that of drowsiness, is most dangerous, and should be

avoided at all costs. There are people for whom sitting for meditation is an invitation to sleep. A restless, terribly out-going mind is even better. One is Rajas, the other Tamas; and Tamas is even lower than Rajas. Hence it can have no place in spiritual life or striving.

Imagine that along with each repetition of the name of your Ishtam or your Mantra your whole body, your whole mind, senses, etc., are purified. This faith must be made very firm because in a way, this is the idea underlying Japa. The name of the Ishtam soothes one's nerves, calms the mind, changes the body. When the mind is in a state of great tension or is depressed, begin at once humming the name, and imagine that this is bringing about a balanced state, a new sort of rhythm, in the body and in the mind. Actually you will feel how it soothes the whole nervous system, how it stops the out-going tendency of the mind more and more. Rhythmic breathing brings about calmness and a certain rhythm in the nervous system, and this again facilitates spiritual practices. The Holy Thought brings about a certain rhythm in body and mind. Think with each repetition of the name of your Ishtam or of your Mantra that you are becoming purer and purer. You

cannot know the effect all at once; but if you go on for some time steadily and doggedly you will feel it; and then after some years, you will be astonished to find what a great change has come over you. There is great scope for experiments. This body is to be polarised and made rhythmic, at least to some extent; and the nerves too are to be polarised and made rhythmic. Through practice, we must make the body, the senses, the mind and the breath rhythmic; then only we come to have the proper mood for spiritual practices and meditation, and we can begin them in right earnest. Everything else belongs to the preliminary steps.

II

While doing your breathing exercises, try to give the following suggestions to your mind: I am breathing in purity, breathing out all impurity. I am breathing in strength, breathing out all weakness. I am breathing in calmness, breathing out all restlessness. I am breathing in freedom, breathing out all bondage. These suggestions may be given even while doing your Japa. They are very helpful in preparing the ground for the real practices.

Strict regularity and a fixed daily routine for all spiritual practices are very much wanted; deep thinking is very essential in the aspirant's life. Then in the fullness of time through habit, the right mood just comes and makes everything else easier. Once this habit is formed, you will make greater progress and feel the strain of all these practices much less.

Everything is difficult in this path. Visualisation is difficult, control of

the mind is difficult, meditation is difficult. Japa is difficult, but if done properly a little less so. So new strength must be gained. And for this the suggestions I mentioned are very helpful. Make use of the great power of sound and sound-symbols. Man is a psychological animal; we must know how to calm our mind and body. Just as this mind of ours is ever ready to deceive us, we must be ever ready to deceive this mind, taking the help of something higher.

You must try to feel that the Holy name, the Holy Mantra, purifies you. If you just try for some time, this feeling is sure to come. Make the experiment yourself. Verify everything that is being told you. If you do not realise these truths yourself, it would be ever so much better to burn all the books on religion, to throw all the holy scriptures overboard.

You cannot realise the great effect of Japa now. This rhythmic repetition of the name of the Ishtam has a great effect and is one of the most essential practices in the life of the beginner. OM is a very fine rhythmic syllable. So we should take its help.

III

Immediately after sitting down for meditation with folded hands, one says: "Whether impure or pure, under all conditions whoever remembers the Lord, becomes purified inwardly and outwardly."

The aspirant thinks that along the Sushumna-canal the Jiva (individualised soul) is taken to the centre in the head and is connected with the Universal Spirit. And then he thinks that the gross and the subtle bodies are burnt away, and he himself be-

comes one with the Absolute. I am He, I am He!

"Do Thou appear here, do Thou stay here, do Thou be steady, do Thou come near me and accept my worship."

Right prayer requires first great intensity, great concentration and one-pointedness. Without these, no prayer will be of any avail.

"Do Thou save me, O Lord, Thou who hast taken this form of the Universe."

Saying this Mantra we remember the All-Pervading Being, the Being with these thousands of heads, thousands of eyes and thousands of feet, who envelopes and permeates this whole universe, nay, even exists beyond.

"Being subject to the limitations (workings) of the vital energy, intellect and the body, whatever sin has been committed by me in the states of waking, dream and deep sleep, in thought word and deed, by means of the different organs of senses—may all that be offered to Brahman. I surrender myself, with all whom I call my own at the feet of the Lord."

IV

Transcend both good and evil; for wherever there is good, there you unavoidably get bad too. Happiness and misery always go together. The moment you accept happiness you must take misery too. All the pairs of opposites go together, so you can never have one without getting the other also. The only solution is to transcend them and reach a plane

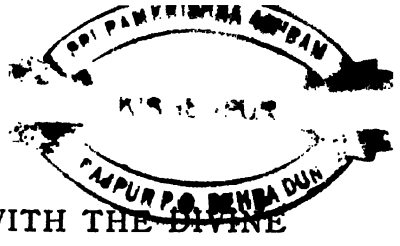
beyond all relative good and evil, all relative happiness and misery. There is no such thing as absolute good or absolute evil, absolute happiness or absolute misery, on this phenomenal plane.

Cheerfulness is a sign of great progress, but many people do not understand this. Spiritual life eases all heart-burn, so it makes people cheerful.

"Let us meditate on the excellent glory of that Divine Being who illumines everything. May He guide our understanding." (Gayatri).

Always take the help of the sound-symbol, for sound and thought are inter-related. Thoughts manifest themselves in different sounds. Is there any eternal relation between the thought and the sound? Take for instance the word cow. We express this 'thing' 'cow' with the help of different sound-symbols. For each language a different sound-symbol is used to express the thought 'cow'. The bovine idea finds its expression; and there is an inseparable connection between this idea and its sound-symbol.

Now we find that the Divine idea finds its expression in different Holy Names, and there is an inseparable connection between the holy idea and the sound. That is why we make use of the sound in our spiritual life. It becomes easier for us to call up the thought with the help of the sound. We should see that we pass from the sound-symbol to the thought; otherwise the sound does not help us.



ASCETICISM AND UNION WITH THE DIVINE

By Wolfram H. Koch

[Mr. Koch is of German nationality and a master of several European languages. He is a staunch friend of the Vedanta movement in Europe. His writings dealing with the life and teachings of the saints and mystics of medieval Europe, familiarises us with the rich spiritual tradition of mystic Christianity, which in India is much less known than the official form of Christianity so enthusiastically propagated by the various Churches. The place of asceticism in spiritual endeavour forms the theme of the first part of the present study, while the second part is a catena of excerpts from a valuable work called 'De Adhaerendo Deo,' full of practical suggestions for the spiritual aspirant. The evident similarity between these teachings and those of the Indian Yogis tends to prove the Vedantic truth that the aim and spirit of all genuine religious quest is the same.]

I

THE little treatise 'De Adhaerendo Deo,' generally attributed to Albert the Great, the great schoolman, theologian and famous teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas, is one of the gems of Western ascetic and mystic literature. The really sensitive reader will fully realise the joy and gladness of the mystic quest, in spite of the apparent austerity and sacrifice of all that the world holds dear and to which the world clings as the most precious treasure and fulfilment of human life.

It is one of the great errors of our times, including the more extreme and all too sweeping forms of some branches of psycho-analysis and modern psycho-analytic faddism, to overlook the joys and satisfaction of the ascetic adventure—the deep inner gladness of a Seuse, a St. Francis, a Teresa de Jesus, a St. John of the Cross—by riveting the whole attention to the apparent self-torture and rigour of some forms of the ascetic life. There is, no doubt, this side to it, especially during the preliminary stages of purification; but people who

only see this negative aspect will never be able to judge fairly; for they are not able to realise the positive, inner meaning of even some of the more repulsive practices and attempts which the out-and-out ascetic or devotee indulges in during his maddest yearning after God and after Union with that Love which never changes and never fetters the human soul to the animal.

On the contrary, these mystics, even the gloomier ones among them, are just like rays of different luminosity gliding hither and thither over the roads of the world and now and then kindling other rays by their illuminating touch, although they may be centuries apart, and speaking widely different languages.

Instead of discussing their so-called aberrations and the apparently negative attitude towards things and ordinary human relationships, as seen by the worldly materialistic mind, rather all of them should be called the 'Giullari di Dio' (the mountebanks) and the joyous buffoons and vagrant singers of God—as the early companions of St. Francis used to call them—

selves, while they wandered over the roads and hills of Umbria, overflowing with gladness and charity and self-denial. For if there is any real joy to be found in this life of ours, the mystic knows it; and none else. The joy and happiness sought by the worldly-minded are mere phantoms that fade away like the light of a bright winter day into long and desperate hours of darkness and forsakenness, leaving us more utterly alone and without light than ever and heightening human suffering sometimes to breaking point. There is, no doubt, more of self-torture in the life of the 'so-called sane worldly man than in that of the most God-intoxicated devotee, although there may be far less of self-denial. This self-torture is not recognised as such, since people have become so familiar with it that they no longer realise its true nature and fundamental unhealthiness, but just take it as simply belonging to the day's work. Whatever the mystic path and adventure may be, it is essentially the most beautiful homecoming ever given to a human being, the one unchanging fulfilment granted him in life and by life, after the curse of separation and separateness, imagined or real, has been removed.

The worldly mind rather approves of the strangest expressions of worldly love, and the Troubadours of the world have always been hailed and applauded by the general public. The public can appreciate the madness of the Troubadour for some human being whom he wishes to serve in all possible chivalrous ways, in tournaments and tiltings, in song and music, even at the cost of his life. When love takes the form of extreme attachment to

transient beauty of body and mind, the world recognises its value and makes much of it in its annals. When love takes the form of detachment from ephemeral beauty and longing feeling for something beyond all change and all dependence, the world feels bewildered and sees nothing but madness and pathological aberration in the sacrifice and the chivalry that this too implies. To a sympathetic observer who is able to take a more realistic view of things, the greatest of the Western mystics appear to be, as it were, the Troubadours of the Lord, the Tumblers of our Lady. He perceives how much inner joy there is even in so gloomy a figure as St. Dominic—the St. Dominic as he is generally painted—, even in the wildest ascetic practices of a Seuse, a Teresa or an Angela of Foligno. Essentially, the mystic quest is a joyous quest, revealing much more joy than is known to the average man through momentary flashes of happiness.

The Hermit of Hampole, one of the most typical—because most intensely personal—Western minstrels of God, a true 'Giullare di Dio' in every sense, and perhaps for that reason the one who bears the greatest likeness to St. Francis and his early companions at San Damiano and the Porziuncola, says in the opening chapters of his great Love Song, the rapturous 'Incendium Amoris' (Fire of Love), of this love and joy as experienced by himself:—

"More have I marvelled than I showed when forsooth I first felt my heart wax warm truly, not in the imagination but as if it were burned with sensible fire. I was forsooth amazed as the burning in my soul burst up; and of an unwonted solace, oft-times because of my ignorance of

such healthy abundance, I have groped (*i.e.*, searched) my breast seeking whether this burning were from any bodily cause outwardly. But when I knew that it was only kindled inwardly from a ghostly cause, and that this burning was nought of fleshly love or concupiscence, in this I conceived it was the gift of my Maker. Gladly therefore I am molten into the desire of greater love; and especially for the inflowing of this most sweet, delightful and ghostly sweetness; the which, with that ghostly flame, has pithily comforted my mind."

"Truly affluence of this everlasting love comes not to me in idleness; nor might I feel this ghostly heat while I was weary bodily for travel, or truly, unman-nerly occupied with worldly mirth, or else given without measure to disputation; but I have felt myself truly that in such things it waxes cold, until, putting a-back all things in which I might outwardly be occu-pied, I have striven to be only in the sight of my Saviour and to dwell in full inward burning."

"While the love of temporal things occupies the heart of any man, it altogether suffers him to have no devotion. Truly the love of God and of this world may never be together in one soul, but which-ever love is stronger puts out the other that thus it may openly be known who is this world's lover and who Christ's fol-lower. Certainly as Christ's lovers behave themselves towards the world and the flesh, so lovers of the world behave themselves towards God and their own souls."

"The perfect, forsooth, that are taken up into this surpassing plenty of endless friendship, and imbued with sweetness that shall not waste, live anew in the clear chalice of full sweet charity; and in the holy counsel of mirth they draw into their souls happy heat, by the which gladdened, they have greater comfort of ghostly lectu-ary (*i.e.*, that which melts in the mouth) than may be trowed."

The Hermit of Hampole, too, knew the necessity of asceticism and of the withdrawal of the mind from outside and worldly things, even from those apparently harmless,—for during the process of purification all outside

things contain in them a germ of danger and distraction. But like all his fellow-seekers he never meant to drive people into the waste and barren lands of gloomy self-condem-nation and constant self-torture as many moderns would have it with re-ference to all such writings and coun-sels, because they, in their materia-listic strait-jackets, can no longer even conceive of the inner joy of a Seuse, a Tauler, a St. Catherine of Genoa and all the others whose whole life, after they had passed through the purificatory stages and processes, was, taken in its inner essence, but a marvellous symphony or a majestic fugue glorifying the ultimate union with the source of all joy and har-mony. So these people, not realising the essential manliness of ascetic treatises like Richard Rolle's '*De Emendatione vitae*' (Of the Amend-ing of Life) and the '*De Adhaerendo Deo*', search for some pathological cause to explain away the experience of the highest consummation of life these mystics had. They cannot see that, to the true mystic who is of healthy mind and body, detachment from his kith and kin and from all that the world holds dear, simply means attachment to something more joy-giving and reliable than the ob-jects from which he detaches himself. No sane person will snatch at a mo-mentary joy and gladness if he is given the possibility of having joy and gladness for his constant and faithful companions, filling him and radiating from him to all he lives with or meets. There is a very deep sense in Christ's words, "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own

life also, he cannot be my disciple" (St. Luke XIV:26, 27).

Such teachings may not be comfortable or satisfactory to the average so-called pious minds that would like to combine both materialism and a comfortable religion more or less based on everyday morality; but their implication is very clear to anybody who is able to take an unbiased attitude, though the ideal may be too high to be reached at once without making use of a series of stepping-stones. And the mystics and seers of Truth of all ages and climes have been trying again and again in different ways and with different means to point out all such stepping-stones to us and persuade us to make use of them for our own growth and liberation and for the welfare of others.

Now, whether it was Albert the Great, the Dominican, the profound thinker and scholar, the naturalist and scientist, or whether it was John of Kastl, the Benedictine monk and mystic, who wrote the little treatise on the union with the Divine and ascetic practices leading up to it, surely it will, in spite of its shortness, ever remain one of the gems of spiritual literature as it deals with what is most essential in the Divine adventure for every earnest spiritual aspirant, be he of the East or of the West. And notwithstanding all the negations it contains, it is a cheerful guide to that eternal joy of the true Tumbler of our Lady, of the spiritual Troubadour—and every real monk belongs to their company—, a guide to that joy which makes sacrifice appear as nothing, a state of mind so well-known to worldly lovers to whom sacrifice for their beloved never means anything negative but rather the very

fulfilment of all their aspirations and longings. It is a curious fact in this topsy-turvy world of ours that anyone may have very strong feelings and emotions with reference to other persons or to some other person, and even show them quite plainly without being considered a lunatic, but the moment the same intensity of feeling is given expression to with reference to some higher and more permanent ideal, the world grows suspicious and puts such a person under the category of those suffering from mental delusions or of the morally and physically unbalanced.

The author of the present treatise, whoever he be, speaks from his own experience and knowledge of the spiritual life and its preliminaries, and this not as the gloomy ascetic of the Inquisition, as such a one is generally painted in lurid colours in the works of later writers of the Reformation, but as the friend and doctor of others who wishes to cure them of their delusions and of their worldly blindness and help them to attain true inner poise and gladness by pointing out to them deeper values of life which can only be seen after we have made some real progress in our detachment from things and people.

II

Unfortunately, space does not allow of a full translation of the whole work being given, but it is to be hoped that the chosen passages will help the reader to a clear conception of some eternal spiritual truths and of the ways and means to attain union with the Divine, as seen and experienced by its author. If, to some, the rules seem too strict and the advice given too inhuman, let them think of the

lover wishing to sacrifice his all for the beloved. This will help them in understanding the attitude of every true spiritual Troubadour and his yearning for union with the object of his love.

At the beginning of the little treatise the author very touchingly says:

"It has come to my mind, in so far as this is possible during the length of time of this exile and pilgrimage, to write once more at the end of my life and to try to deal with the most complete detachment to be attained in this life and of the pure, tranquil and strong union of the soul thus attached to God alone. All the more, as Christian perfection itself has no other end but that charity which unites one to God. Everyone is obliged, for reasons of salvation, to join that union with God, through charity, which is brought about by strict fulfilment of precepts and conformity with the Divine Will: this strict fulfilment of precepts removes all that is opposed to the essence and virtue of charity."

Even in these few sentences we feel how, to the author, this 'most complete detachment' really means the most perfect and unalterable love to which every spiritual man should attain, and which he should even become so as to help his fellow-men along the thorny road to higher evolution and to a deeper understanding of the ultimate values of life, drawing them away from the wild-goose chase after the ephemeral which only unman men more and more by enticing them to run into desperate ventures to obtain they know not what and making them come back to the one support of all life, the only unchanging Reality in and beyond all.

We shall now turn to the words of the author himself, where he tries to teach us something of the path to be traversed with its self-denial, sacrifice, struggle and final joy of achievement.

DETACHMENT FROM ALL THAT IS CREATED

If anyone really desires to reach or to approach such a state of union, this is what is necessary:—Under all circumstances his eyes and his senses must be closed to everything outside; there must not be anything to embarrass trouble, preoccupy or disquiet him; and he must entirely detach himself from all things as being useless, harmful and pernicious for that end.

Having done so, he must recollect himself completely within himself; and there he must not hold anything else before the eyes of his mind than Jesus, endeavouring with all his strength and care to penetrate into him through him, *i.e.* through him as man into him as God, through the wounds of his humanity to the most intimate sanctuary of his Divinity. At the same time he should surrender himself with everything that concerns him in all simplicity and singleness of mind in a blind abandonment to the infallible care of His Divine Providence, according to the words of St. Peter—"Cast all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

If the monk does not do this, what does it profit him to win the whole world losing his soul? The station he has embraced, the holiness he professes, the outward appearance which symbolises it, his poor dress, shaven head and all outward observances—what do these profit him without a life based on humility and truth, the life of Jesus Christ dwelling within him through the faith created by charity, according to that word of the Gospel, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you'. For this Kingdom of Heaven is Jesus Christ.

The more the mind is preoccupied with the thought and care for lower and human things, the more it moves away from higher and heavenly things; and the greater the fervour with which one withdraws one's faculties from the memory, love and thought of lower things so as to turn them towards the higher, the greater will be the perfection of prayer and the purer the contemplation.

It is not possible for the soul to apply itself at the same time perfectly to two objects which are as opposed to each other as light and darkness. Now, to unite oneself to God means dwelling in light, to attach oneself to the world means being plunged into darkness.

And this is the highest perfection of man in this life: To be united to God in such a way that the soul finds itself wholly with all its faculties and powers gathered into God its Lord, so that it forms with Him but one spirit, and that nothing occupies its memory any longer but God, and that all its affections, made one in the joy of Love, delight only in the Creator who is their sweet and perfect rest.

God is the form of the soul and must imprint Himself upon it just as the seal upon wax, the trade-mark on its object. Now this is only realised when reason is perfectly illumined, according to its capacity, by the knowledge of God, the highest truth, and the will entirely captivated to love the highest Good, and memory fully absorbed in the contemplation and enjoyment of eternal Bliss, and the sweet and delicious restfulness of such Bliss. It is the undeviating continuance in this state of mind that makes the glory of the Blessed and the perfection of their home, and it is manifest that the perfect beginning of this state is perfection in this very life.

Happy is he who, withdrawing himself continually from all phantoms and images, falls back upon his inmost being and there uplifts himself to God. He ends in forgetting all representations of senses to a certain degree, and thus, with his understanding and will made bare, simple and pure, succeeds in applying himself to the most eminently simple object: God.

So eject from your mind all phantoms and forms of created things in order to occupy yourself with God with intelligence, heart and will, utterly denuded. This is the goal of all spiritual exercises, namely, to enable one to betake oneself to God and to rest in Him within oneself through a very pure act of the understanding and a very fervent movement of the will, without encumbrance of sense-images.

For this reason it is absolutely necessary that whatever may have been heard, seen, done, said or anything similar, it must not bring into the soul either images or distracting occupations; and the mind must avoid shaping therefrom representations and feeding therewith the imagination, either before, after or during, such a time. When images of outward objects no

longer rise in the memory of the mind, one can freely devote oneself to prayer, to meditation, to psalmody or to any other work and spiritual exercise without having to fear the backslidings which cause distractions.

If you constantly occupy your imagination day and night with your own concerns, making your mind the slave of no end of idle ideas, running from one thought to another and revolving them again and again in every possible manner and direction, you spend your time and your energy uselessly and foolishly. So whatever happens and however and wherever, receive it with perfect equanimity of soul in silence and peace as coming from the fatherly hands of Divine Providence.

As far as possible keep apart from all your acquaintances and friends and all men as well as from the affairs of the world which might hinder your intentions. Zealously grasp all opportunities to find place, time and means to devote yourself to inner rest and contemplation. Do not love anything so much as silence and solitude. Avoid the shipwrecks of the world which surrounds you and flee from all the troubles of a noisy and agitated world.

Therefore, at all times, your principal endeavour should be to possess your heart pure, free and calm, keeping yourself like a stranger to the outer senses. Recollect yourself continually within and as much as possible hold the paths to your heart, carefully closed to all representations of sense and to all images of earthly things.

One should clearly know that among all spiritual exercises the purification of the heart claims in a certain way the foremost place; nay, it is the end to which all these exercises are directed, and the reward which generally crowns all the efforts of the truly inward and religious man in this life.

Struggle energetically to collect all the scattered forces of your heart again and all the affections of your soul and to lead them back to the only true, pure and sovereign good, and to possess them recollected within yourself. Then endeavour to keep your mind busy with Divine things pertaining to God, and abandoning all the frail objects of the earth, try to

make your heart incessantly rise towards these realities of the higher world and, through an intense effort with the grace of Jesus Christ, to transform it there.

Thus work without ceasing and with all your strength and singleness of your heart, until you succeed in no longer being agitated or troubled by the phantoms of exterior things, and in keeping yourself always firmly established in God, as if your soul were already beyond time in the Now of Eternity, that is to say, in the bosom of Divinity, abandoning yourself through that love of Jesus Christ that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith, and trusting yourself wholly, fully and absolutely to God in all the trials and events of life, finding your joy in patiently and always obeying His will and good pleasure.

These truths, well meditated upon, will do more for the happiness of your life than all the riches, all the pleasures, all the honours, nay, even more than all wisdom and science of this deceitful world, of this corruptible life and existence, even should you surpass in all the gifts all those that ever lived.

THE NAKEDNESS OF THE MIND

It is a certain truth that the more you denude yourself of images and outward embarrassments of the world and of the senses, the more of its strength and its inner sensibility will your soul recover, wherewith you taste the things from above. Therefore learn to sever yourself from phantoms and representations of senses. There is nothing that pleases God so much as a mind bare of this sort of images. He even finds His "delights with the children of men," that is, with those who, free from all these occupations, distractions and passions, occupy themselves with Him and endeavour to unite themselves to Him with a calm, simple and pure mind.

Otherwise, if your memory, imagination and thought are often busy with such things, be it that they present themselves for the first time, or that they come to you from the past, how could your soul not be caught and not receive all these impressions of the diverse objects that occupy you? The Holy Ghost separates Himself from perverse thoughts and "His power, when it is tired, reproveth the unwise."

Always remember this as the fundamental principle of the spiritual doctrine: You who aspire after the knowledge of God and after His service, after His sweet familiarity, if you really wish to possess God, you must denude your heart of all affection pertaining to the senses, not only of affection for some person, whoever he be, but also of affection for any thing, whatsoever it be, in order that,—thus detached from everything—you may incline towards God with all your heart and all your forces without any division, free from all care and all preoccupation, relying on His Providence only with full trust for everything.

INNER RECOLLECTEDNESS

In spiritual progress and the work of intimate union to God within yourself there must be no rest, no turning back, before having reached the goal. If your mind allows itself to be caught and stops at the lower things that cross its path, it finds itself at once dragged away by innumerable distractions and along countless by-paths. It divides itself, as it were, in itself, gets dissipated and dispersed over as many objects as there are to attract its desires. Then any movement one makes is but aimless agitation. One runs without ever arriving, one tires oneself out without ever attaining rest.

But if, on the contrary, our heart and our mind, carried away by love and desire, cut themselves off from the innumerable lower distractions, if, step by step abandoning these lower things, so as to collect themselves within on the only immutable Good that gives all satisfaction, they learn to dwell within themselves only and attach themselves to that Good through a love that no longer knows any separation, then, instead of losing themselves in dissipation, they recollect themselves in unity and fortify themselves the more, the more they lift themselves up, carried along by knowledge and yearning. They acquire the habit of inwardly abiding within this true and highest Good. They end by becoming absolutely inseparable from it, and in this way reach the immutable possession of true life, which is God Himself. Then they rest for ever without fearing the vicissitudes of change and time, in this inner quiet and secret abode of Divinity,

being perfectly established within themselves in Jesus Christ who is for those who come to him "the way and the truth and the life".

THE PERFECT BEARING OF THE MIND

Above all it is important to hold your mind well unsullied without representations or pictures of sense, and free from anything that might bring embarrassment to it. Therefore, do not preoccupy yourself either with the world nor with your friends, nor with prosperity or the future, with yourself or with others, not even too much with your own sins. But with a certain simplicity of purity and without pictures think that you are beyond and outside this world with God alone, as if your soul were already in Eternity far from the body in the state of separation from it. Certainly it would not occupy itself with the things of the earth, nor would it be anxious about what was happening in this world, whether there was peace or war, fine weather or rain, nor about any mundane thing, but wholly in conformity with God it would have its thoughts, desires and affections engaged with God alone.

So in the manner of this soul, abandon even from now on your body and all created things, present and future, and in nakedness and detachment keep the mind focussed as much as you can on the uncreated light. Have your mind purged of any image that might embarrass it and veil this light from you, like an angel bound to a body who is in no way hindered by the workings of the flesh, nor embarrassed by vain and futile thoughts.

Therefore the mind should strengthen itself against temptations, persecutions and insults of all sorts, so that it dwells unshakably established in God, always self-composed whatever be its fortune.

The faithful soul must be united to God, make and hold its will conformable to the Divine Will, and for that reason have no inward occupation with or attachment for any creature, as if it were existing before its creation and as if there existed but the soul and God alone; and it should in this state receive everything, generally and particularly, from the hands of Divine Providence with perfect unvariableness and unshakable security, waiting for the Lord

alone in all things in patience, silence and peace.

To denude one's mind of all images is the sovereign means to arrive at a truly spiritual life, at this union with God, which is brought about in the highest part of the soul through good will, and which makes the soul wholly conformable to God.

Let us go straight to God. Let Him alone be the centre, and the object, and the motive and the one end of all our contemplation, of our whole life, of all our works—He who with a mere sign of His will could and would still produce in infinite number beings more perfect than any that exist. He fills all. He is, according to his own essence, wholly and completely in all things, both generally and particularly, more intimate, more present to everything than that thing ever is to itself. In Him everything finds itself reunited to unity and everything lives eternally.

CONTEMPLATION

To the extent to which the soul withdraws from everything and inwardly falls back upon itself, the eye of contemplation opens itself more and more, and the soul makes use of itself as a ladder to cross all that is created and to arrive at contemplating Divinity. And in this contemplation it is kindled with the love of Heavenly and Divine things and of those of Eternity and no longer looks at the things of time except from a distance, as mere nothings.

In this way advancing in God through the way of elimination, we first deny everything that is corporeal and that can in any way be perceived by the senses and pictured by the imagination; secondly, we deny even what is purely intellectual, and finally even that existence by which He dwells in the creatures. This is, according to St. Dionysius, the most excellent manner in which we can be united to God in our present condition of travellers on the way.

After all, O my Soul, why vainly occupy thyself with so many things which always leave thee empty? Seek, love, this only perfect Good that contains all good. It suffices thee. Unfortunate is he who knows and possesses everything else, but ignores this Good. And he who knows everything else and this Good at the same time, is not happier because he knows everything else, but only because of this Good. So St. John

said : "This is eternal life; that they may know Thee, the only true God". And the Prophet has it, "I shall be satisfied when Thy Glory shall appear."

With these words we will take leave of the author, however fragmentary the chosen passages and however faint the echo of his thoughts carried to our ear may be, for, as Pascal so beautifully expressed it in his 'Pensees' :

There is always light enough for those who desire to see God and darkness enough for those who have no such desire. This light will illumine the chosen and this darkness will make them humble. And here we see the baseness and the nobility of man. We cannot find happiness in ourselves. We cannot find it in the world around us, and in the end we discover that our true joy is not to be found in ourselves or in this world, but in God.

If we constantly think of and act up to the precepts given us by the great God-Men of the world—which

can be summed up in the words of Sri Ramakrishna: "If you give your mind to God in solitude, you will receive the spirit of renunciation and devotion. If you give the same mind to the world, it will become vulgar and think only about the world which is another name for 'Woman and Gold'"—we shall all, one day, belong, consciously and full of gladness, to the company of the 'Giullari di Dio,' the merry Tumblers of our Lady, singing our own songs of joy and fulfilment for Him and in Him who is the

"Father of all ! in every age
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by
sage,
Jehovah, Jove or Lord."

—Pope.

THE SACRED GOSPEL OF SRIVAISHNAVAS

By A. Srinivasachariar, B.A., L.T.

[Mr. Srinivasachariar is the joint-editor of the *Ramakrishna Vijayam*, the Tamil organ of the Mission, and a pious Srivaishnava. He attempts a brief and authoritative exposition of the two major texts of the Srivaishnava faith known as the 'sacred couplet,' which may be termed the systole and diastole of Srivaishnavism.]

THE SACRED COUPLETS

THE Sacred couplet consists of the two sentences *Sriman nara-yana-charanau saranam prapadye* and *Srimate narayanaya namah*. The first one is a declaration of the Jivatman or the individual Soul that he seeks refuge in the feet of the Lord through the meditation of Lakshmi, and the second is a fervant prayer for service to the Dual Personality—the Divine Mother eternally associated with the father of the Universe.

Just as Narayana, the Supreme

Lord, is the means and the end sought after by the devotee, so also is Sri both the mediatrix and the partaker of His service. Sri, as the name itself implies, conveys a double meaning : the Being that is worshipped by all mortals with a view to attain salvation, and also the Being that worships the Lord as the eternal, ideal, devotee and servant. The constant association of Sri with God as his inseparable essence like that of the fragrance with the flower and the lustre with the gem, makes Her function of media-

tion available to mortals at all times, in all places and under all conditions. The consciousness of wanton dire sinfulness on the part of the Jivas (individual Souls) resulting from an overwhelming sense of fear to approach the Lord for forgiveness and redemption, and the disinterested witness-like attitude adopted by the Supreme Being towards the workings of the law of Karma in the world of sport or Leela, creates a yawning gulf between the two ; and this can be bridged only by the effective intercession of Lakshmi who could hold the Lord captive by the invincible charms of Her sweet and unique devotion to Him and Her extreme dependence on Him. Her appeal to the Supreme Being, who is infatuated with Her devotion, for mercy on behalf of Her frail suffering children can never go in vain ; and even the most heinous sins of man do not stand as a bar either to Her ever-ready advocacy, or His joyous submission to Her persuasions. What Her presence meant in Her incarnation as Sita to Indra's son who, disguised as a crow, perpetrated a grievous crime to Her and what Her absence meant to Ravana who was not guilty of such a flagrant offence, is well-known to the readers of the Ramayana: while the latter lost his head, the former was forgiven and saved by Her intercession. To those sinful ones who desire to approach God directly, He appears only as a transcendent Being possessing absolute independence and infinite supremacy, and maintaining an attitude of cold solicitude for the ultimate weal of all mankind, and as a stern Ruler guided by uncompromising eternal laws of His making; but to those who seek to reach Him through

Sri, to those who view Him in the proper perspective furnished by Her, He appears as an all-loving Person teeming with qualities essential for protection of the Jivas. They are : (1) an intense love like that of the cow for the new-born calf—a love that is not only blind to all faults that the Jiva, who is the object of that love, may have, but even relishes those sins ; (2) a profound consciousness of the proprietorship of all Jivas, which assures them that His property would be taken care of by Him ; (3) extreme affability and condescension that make Him easy of approach at their own levels; (4) wisdom to discern keenly at a glance the actual needs of the Jivas and (5) the power to supply those needs at will. The mediation of Lakshmi evokes these qualities lying dormant in the Lord's mind, and they dispel from the minds of even desperate weaklings the oppressing feelings of fear, lack of confidence, estrangement and impotence, and fill their minds with faith, hope, courage, and cheer. This function of Sri can be compared to that of a filter-bed which purifies the water and passes it on. The filter-bed is not the means to pass on the water, but it removes the dirt and sends on pure water. So also Lakshmi withholds the sins as the Jivatma passes on to God.

Since Lakshmi acts only as the mediatrix and takes no part in the means, the feet of the Lord alone form the sole and sure means of salvation; and hence the devotee desirous of getting rid of the obstacles to God-realisation and enjoying the bliss of eternal service to Him, seeks refuge in the feet of the Lord and clings to them firmly, making thereby the end

itself the means. The act of taking refuge may be by words, or acts, or by contemplation—by any one, or more or all of these—since, after all, these are only accessories, God alone constituting the direct means. However, mental contemplation is stressed in preference to physical or oral acts, in as much as realisation is more the concern of the mind than of the body or the mouth. This act of taking refuge is sincerely done once only, and once for all, since surrender to God or Prapatti stultifies itself by repetition; yet the contemplation of the completed act on subsequent occasions in moments of contrition for having strayed away from the ideal owing to inherent human frailty, is neither forbidden nor contradictory. On the other hand it should be resorted to often and often as a guarantee for the prevention of a future relapse into the ante-Prapatti stage, and also because of the intense bliss it generates, which makes the enjoyer reluctant to give up the act.

In the second part of the Mantra the devotee prays for selfless service to God for its own sake, utterly regardless of all motives of reward or enjoyment. Here God is the final goal of all human aspirations, and Lakshmi's function then is to accept the service rendered by the Jiva, as His inseparable partner, and to pass

it on to Him after sweetening it and intensifying its value. Since Seshatva, or serviceability to God implies Seshatva to Sri, service to the Dual Personality is the duty, the birth-right and the privilege of every soul; and in this respect the indefatigable Lakshmana, whose sole aim of life was to render service to the Eternal Pair—Rama and Sita—, stands out as the ideal devotee and the pattern of true service for all times. This service should be perpetual, and should be directed along channels that will afford an ever-increasing delight in God. It should have for its aim the sole enjoyment of God without the least trace of enjoyment for the self, or jointly, for self and God. The word *namah* in the second sentence indicates this renunciation of the fruits of service. It also emphasises the idea that no enjoyment direct or indirect should be sought after by the individual for his own sake. Even the soul-ravishing beauty of the Lord and Sri, tempting the devotee to divert his attention from loving service to the selfish enjoyment of the beauty, should be considered a mighty obstacle by the devotee; and hence there should be an incessant prayer not only for service but also for the removal of all obstacles to such service.





FAITH AND RATIONALISM

By S. R. Sarma, M.A.

[In the following paragraphs Professor Sarma maintains that not only faith has its own part to play in the proper and effective functioning of reason but also that it is the only guide to take us to the realms of Truth where reason throws no light.]

IF there are any two words that need to be carefully analysed to-day more than any others, they are *Faith* and *Rationalism*. These words indeed are very familiar, but that is no guarantee of their being well understood with their fullest implications. Faith and Rationalism are too often considered to be contradictory. What could be more obvious than the opposition between 'Men of Faith' and 'Rationalists'? In the modern world the latter consider themselves the leaders of progress; and the former are classed with fossils. Yet this is a case of my 'doxy' being *orthodoxy* and your 'doxy' being *heterodoxy*. Nothing could be more irrational. Take a living illustration. Is Mahatma Gandhi a leader of progress or is he a fossil? In other words, is he a Rationalist, or a Man of Faith? Though extremists might dub him or denounce him as being the one or the other, to the thoughtful he must appear as one in whom both the faculties are actively present and exercised. He is a living refutation of the compartmental view of life.

Rationalism is perhaps better defined negatively than positively. It is the philosophy that rejects everything not acceptable to our normal reasoning faculty. Its facade is attractive. A history of religion appears to be a history of the substitu-

tion of superstitions. With the advancement of enlightenment old superstitions are no doubt liquidated. Our religion therefore is certainly more rationalised than that of our remote ancestors. Shamanism and fetish-worship have yielded place to Vedanta, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, etc. Within these folds, however, are endless distinctions, each claiming to be more true than all others. To the Rationalist this appears to be a war of mutual extermination, and he presumes that all are equally superstitious, all are equally deluded.

What then is the basis of Faith? Or is it only self-deception? "Faith," says Rabindranath Tagore, "is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark." It is therefore not mere belief or hope; it is a sense of certainty about the future. It is the faculty of penetrating further than the myopic multitude can see. It is a search-light that can scan the encircling gloom and spot out Truth. Those who deny it are simply prosaic persons who lack the poetic vision. They are music-deaf and cannot appreciate divine symphonies. The persistence of these is not a refutation of either poetry or music. Rationalism cannot therefore liquidate Faith.

Rationalism is faith in Reason. But reason is only one of our facul-

ties. If reason raises man above the mere animal, so does faith. Faith does not belong to the sub-human world. The degree of faith is the measure of man's superiority over lower creatures. The range of the eye of faith is even greater than that of reason. But there is no antithesis between the two, any more than between our eyes and ears. Ordinarily we may trust our eyes more than our ears. But there are spheres where we are compelled to rely upon our ears more than our eyes. I would sooner allow my ears to judge a musician than my eyes.

Life is larger than what would be admitted by reason. To ignore its vastness and complexity by the test of reason alone is to put on blinkers. To throw away faith as something irrational is to throw away the most precious part of life. Trust is the noblest element in our human relations, and trust is faith. We must have faith in ourselves, our neighbours, friends, relations, institutions, society, philosophy, and way of living.

Without that we cannot lead a rational life. Both rationalism and faith must be assigned their proper places. We cannot do without either. Much energy is wasted in mutual recriminations by the votaries of partial views. The vision of life as a whole alone is capable of giving peace and harmony. And we cannot view life as a whole without both reason and faith.

India led in the vanguard of civilisation when she possessed this supreme faculty. We have suffered not because we had too much of faith, and too little of rationalism, but because we lost faith in ourselves and were dazzled by philosophies other than our own. These should have enriched our lives instead of impoverishing them. We have betimes realised this. That is why there is a renaissance in our national life. Faith is reviving without making us more irrational. Rationalism must reinforce our faith instead of undermining it, for in their synthesis lies our salvation.

RAJA YOGA—ITS GOAL AND METHOD

By Swami Prabhavananda

[Swami Prabhavananda is the Head of the Vedanta centre of Hollywood, U.S.A., and the author of *Vedic Religion and Philosophy*. He sets forth below the psychology and ethics of Yoga in a form easily understandable to the modern reader.]

PATANJALI has defined Yoga as 'restraining the mind-stuff from taking various forms'. What in the West is known as mind is called in Eastern psychology the Chitta or 'mind-stuff'. The Chitta according to this psychology, comprises the Manas or that which receives the im-

pressions from the outer senses; the Buddhi or the discriminating intellect; and the Aham or the sense of ego. The Chitta or mind-stuff, despite the fact that it perceives and is conscious, is not the Self, but only the instrument of the Self. The Self is Intelligence Itself, the Knower, the Seer,

the Subject; the Chitta reflects the divine illumination and so it appears—but only appears—to see and to know. Knowledge or perception according to Patanjali, is a Vritti, a wave in the mind. All knowledge is objective, the Seer, the real Self or the Purusha who is behind all knowledge, remaining unknown. What Western Psychologists call introspection or knowledge of the subjective mind—even that Patanjali regards as objective, since the mind is not the Seer, but only an instrument of seeing, and since it is as much an object of perception as is the objective world. Man thinks that he knows himself, but that is an error which he falls into, by identifying himself with his mind and with the waves that rise upon it. Something external impinges on his mind and raises in it a wave of happiness or a wave of misery, with the result that he regards himself as either happy or unhappy. This delusion continues as long as he remains ignorant of the true nature of his Self—which is said to be Shuddha (pure), Buddha (enlightened) and Mukta (free). Now the method of Yoga is to control completely the waves of the mind, 'restraining the mind-stuff from taking various forms', so that the real, free, and divine nature of the Self may at last be revealed.

In order to make clear what has just been explained, the commentators employ a simple image. If the surface of a lake, they say, is covered with ripples, or its water is muddy, the bottom cannot be seen. The lake is the Chitta, and the bottom of the lake is the Self.

With respect to the predominance of the three Gunas, again, the mind may be divided into three states or

conditions. When Tamas prevails, there is darkness; when Rajas, there is restlessness; and when Sattva, there is calm, serenity, tranquillity. This calm is the extreme reverse of dullness and darkness; and when this calm possesses the mind as a result of control over the waves of the mind, and a greater knowledge is revealed, at once there appears a greater reflection of Purusha.

Whenever the waves of the mind are made tranquil, knowledge of the Self is revealed. This it was that Christ meant when he said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The subdual of the waves that would possess the mind is not a superficial process, nor a momentary one, but a complete transformation. It is a change that can be achieved by Yogic discipline. Doubtless St. Paul had reference to this kind of restraint when he said, "Be ye transformed by the renewal of your own mind."

In order to achieve this renewal of the mind, Yoga psychology considers not only the actual states (Vrittis) of the mind-stuff (Chitta), but also the latent states called the Samskaras, or 'potentialities.' Before we can hope to restrain the mind-waves successfully, we must endeavour to eradicate the potentialities, the root impressions, which control the actual states of the Vrittis. For when one mental state passes into another, it is not altogether lost, but leaves behind it an impression in the Chitta—an impression or Samskara, which in turn tends to give rise to similar Vrittis, or states. Thus the Vrittis cause the Samskaras, and the Samskaras cause the Vrittis. The Samskaras are like deep roots in the soil of the Chitta.

from which grow the actual plants, the Vrittis. To destroy the weeds we must eradicate the roots, and to do this it is not enough to restrain the actual Vrittis, but it is also necessary through Yoga discipline, to overcome, weaken, and destroy the Samskaras or the potentialities of the actual states.

Modern Western psychology, particularly Freudian, takes into consideration these potentialities. Freud postulates three 'areas', or states of mind; the unconscious, the pre-conscious, and the conscious. The unconscious is the receptacle of such of our past experiences as have been definitely forgotten and cannot be recalled by the ordinary method of recollection. The pre-conscious is that part of the mind in which are stored experiences which, though apparently forgotten, can be recalled by an effort of the will. Modern Western psychologists differ in their explanation of the unconscious mind, some holding that it is the receptacle of our individual past experiences, and of these alone, while others would include also the common experience of the race.

Yoga psychology agrees with the Western view that the unconscious is a depository of certain individual past experiences, but it differs radically as to the interpretation of those experiences. To Patanjali our individual past is not limited to the present life, as all Western Psychologists would assume, but extends indefinitely backward through a succession of incarnations. According to the law of Karma, our birth is the result of our past lives, in each of which, and in the present one, we possess the same Chitta. In the 'unconscious mind', if we may adopt the Freudian

term, are stored the impressions and the tendencies which have been formed in our previous existences, and which, taken together, have made us what we are.

The Samskaras or potentialities represent therefore the root impressions received from all our past experiences, including those of our former lives; and they have moulded our characters so that, even though largely forgotten, they still control or influence our every act and thought. They may also take on fresh life and potency without our conscious effort or will. Now Yoga philosophy proposes a method of discipline—and this is the very core of its doctrine—whereby these root impressions may first be overcome, and then destroyed, and whereby a complete transformation of character may in the end be effected. Yoga psychology agrees with Freud that the conscious is controlled and guided by the unconscious, but it insists that there is a power inherent in the mind, through which, restraining itself, it can overcome the unconscious and all its tendencies, and achieve by so doing a complete renewal. Thus is its original purity restored—a purity that reflects the supreme purity and infinite knowledge of the Divine Self. Thus at last does the Self learn its true nature—its utter separateness from the non-self—and attain to freedom.

Any thought-wave arising in the mind or any perception apprehended by the mind, is a Vritti. The objects of perception and of thought are innumerable; innumerable therefore, are the Vrittis. But in general terms Patanjali makes of them five divisions. First are Pramanas or valid?

states of cognition, such as perception, inference and scriptural testimony.

These five general kinds of Vrittis have again been classified into two main divisions: *Klishta*, those which lead towards bondage and suffering, and *Aklishta*, those which lead towards freedom and illumination. This distinction is made by the great Yogi because of an important psychological fact. Though the ideal is the attainment of a state in which 'all modifications of the mind-stuff are controlled', such a state is not possible except through a twofold process. First, the thought-waves that are impure and lead to bondage and suffering, must be overcome by raising the Vrittis that 'lead to liberation'. Then these good Vrittis themselves must be eliminated, so that all motion of the mind-stuff may cease and Pure Intelligence may stand revealed.

Could it be, one wonders, that the 'will to liberation' described in Yoga philosophy is the force which Freud wrongly interprets as the 'death-instinct'? Freud finds within us two innate tendencies: the life-instinct and the death-instinct. But the death-instinct is not, he thinks, to be found in its pure form, but is inextricably mixed with its opposite, the life-instinct—a fact that explains the strange phenomena of sadism and masochism and the feeling of alternate love and hate towards the same object. We are not concerned, however, with the truth or falsity of Freud's explanation of the phenomena we have just mentioned, but rather with the fact that by his characterization of these two instincts as antithetical he almost arrived at the position taken by Yoga psychology—and yet somehow failed to do so.

Yoga mentions the two opposed instincts: the 'will to live' and the 'will to liberation'. The 'will to liberation' (Plato's 'inner check' and Buddha's 'higher will'), exists, according to Yoga, side by side with the 'will to live' (the 'will to desire'), though in some men it is weak and in others strong. It is the principal purpose of Yoga psychology to show how the 'higher will' may be strengthened and the 'will to live' overcome.

As the 'will to liberation' gains in strength, the 'will to live', what Freud calls the 'life-instinct', grows weaker. Evidence of this fact may be seen in the lives of all who check the lower craving. And, strange though it may seem, this craving can be completely overcome, though the 'will to liberation' cannot. This latter, which Freud misnames the 'death instinct', is to be found mixed with the 'life-instinct' in all souls.

The concrete means by which spiritual control is exercised, Patanjali analyzes in considerable detail. Control, he says, is 'by practice and non-attachment.'

There are stages of non-attachment, the commentators point out, through which we pass as we practice the Yoga disciplines and as we strive to attain to the supreme ideal of renunciation. There are four such stages. The first is *Yatamaana*, when there arises an inner struggle from not permitting the mind to seek gratification of the senses. The second is *Vyatireka*, when through self-analysis we realise the measure of our own achievement in the field of self-control. We realise what desires we can control and what we, as yet, cannot. Then with vigour and enthusiasm we must continue to attack all desires that still

remain in the way of illumination. The third is Ekendriya, when greater self-control is achieved, and the heart, knowing their ephemeral and shadowy nature, no longer desires the objects of enjoyment; yet there may still remain in the heart a longing curiosity. When this longing also has been overcome, we attain the fourth and the highest stage of renunciation. This is known as Vasikara.

This, the supreme goal of renunciation, is achieved only by a person who has attained complete enlighten-

ment. "That supreme non-attachment comes from knowledge of the Self"—says Patanjali. And the Gita says: "Objects fall away from the abstinent man, leaving the longing behind. But his longing also ceases, who sees the Supreme." And, again, summing up the whole truth of Yoga the Gita has: "With the heart unattached to external objects, he realises the joy that is in the Self. With the heart devoted to the meditation of Brahman, he attains undecaying happiness."

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICAN LIFE

By Bhai Manilal C. Parekh

(Continued from the previous issue)

[Bhai Manilal C. Parekh is a well-known religious preacher and author. For the past twenty-five years he has been a teacher of religion, first as a missionary of Brahmo-Samaj, next as one of the Christian Church and afterwards as an independent teacher of Bhagava'ta Dharma. The present essay gives a vivid and interesting picture of American life which he had the opportunity of studying directly during his stay in that country. While Bhai Manilal is warmly appreciative of the perfections which the American civilization exhibits in some of its expressions, he criticizes with becoming restraint and judiciousness the harmful tendencies that meet the eyes of even a casual observer of American life.]

FREEDOM OF WOMEN

AS an integral part of this unique democracy, almost as a crown thereof, is the marvellous freedom and development of the women of the land. In my tour round the world, nowhere did I see women so free and cultured as in the United States. Indeed, if I may say so without any disrespect to the American man, the woman here on the whole is even more cultured than man. This advance on the part of women is a most noticeable feature of the land and it is found all over the land. It is no small part of the

moral and spiritual achievement of this nation that its womanhood should be so entirely free from that fear and inferiority-complex which have been hitherto for ages an integral part of feminine nature.

The sight of this freedom was a most welcome surprise to me. The reality far surpassed anything I had conceived in regard to this liberty from what I had read in books or heard from friends. In schools, in colleges, at homes, in churches in the streets, in railway trains, in fact everywhere, I found women meeting persons of the opposite sex as perfect

equals, and this was entirely different from what I had known or seen in Asia or Europe. I might almost say that the American woman is freer from sex-consciousness than any other. I say this with full knowledge of the fact that there is a tremendous amount of sex-complex in the country.

I was also extremely surprised at the keen intellectual interest that women everywhere take in the larger problems of human life. The women here are alive to what is happening all over the world as they are nowhere else. The extraordinarily large number of Women's Clubs scattered all over the land abundantly testifies to this fact; and the women's share of interest and work is very often fifty fifty, and at times even more, in those clubs and associations which are not reserved exclusively for men. It seems as if the men here glory in the fact that women are so advanced intellectually, and everywhere woman is paid deference to by man as his intellectual equal if not superior. This thing is entirely peculiar to this land. There is no talking down to woman here as in most other lands. Often it is the other way about. This may be due to several causes: one of the most potent being the fact that women predominate so largely in the teaching profession. Co-education is also a cause of this feeling of equality and comradeship between man and woman. A part of the credit for this belongs to the husbands also, for nowhere in the world they are so humble and patient and deferential, if not obedient, as in the United States.

This very remarkable advance, however, is not without some serious drawbacks. It has been attained with a certain amount of 'de-womani-

sation', if such a term can be allowed. The equality between man and woman which is no longer a theory but a veritable fact has resulted in the reproduction of masculine features in the American woman. This also was to me a matter of surprise from the very first. Nor am I alone in this observation. I found more than one Hindu feeling the same way. Nor does this masculinity in women seem to be a recent growth.

Sometimes I have wondered whether there is anything in the American man corresponding to this change in woman so that the usual difference between man and woman has been eliminated on both sides, though the change is more noticeable in woman than in man. Whatever it be, it seems that if men and women live and work together in all the spheres of life as they have been doing in this country, and that if there is no delimitation of frontiers of respective fields of work, there is bound to be a certain amount of assimilation on both sides in mentality as in physical appearance, and this is just what is happening here. There is a corresponding loss in chivalry and romance which is so often complained of in this land. The woman has also suffered a loss in respect and reverence which are sometimes paid to women in many other countries. It seems, however, that this is a price that must be paid for the close fellowship and comradeship which she enjoys. Is it in full consciousness of these facts or in consequence of some subtle intuition which never fails a woman, much less a whole race of them, that the American women go through a course of fasting, year-in and year-out, in order to ward off

the evils of grossness which is sure to attach itself to them because of their work in those soiled spheres which have been reserved for men so far? Short of the masculinity mentioned above, the American women as a class are the most attractive of all in form, manners and person.

CHILDREN OF AMERICA

One wonders if it is an integral part of this democracy that the children here should be so free as they are. Does it mean an all-round levelling up or down, a razing down of distinctions of all kinds, of class and sex and age also? At any rate, it would seem so to a visitor who after all can judge only from appearances. Freedom is in the air, and not only the young people but boys and girls of tender age, and even children, breathe it. It is imbibed with one's mother's milk. Children of four and five are treated as comrades and they behave as such not always to their advantage. Such parental authority as is still found in almost all countries of both Asia and Europe is conspicuous by its absence, and this lack of discipline at home has its counterpart in the school and later on in the college and the university. The children are not only free but they seem to know too much. During my short stay in the United States I came to know of crimes such as murders committed by children of four and five and a little older, (of course without their being fully conscious of what they were doing) like of which I had never heard before. Such things happen because they are denied nothing and feel in themselves the maturity of age while they are so young.

Perhaps this is a case of too much love of, and consequent indulgence towards, children on the part of parents. Japan is said to be a Paradise for children. The same may be said with equal truth of this country. Perhaps the comparatively smaller number of children also has something to do with the remarkable tenderness which I have seen lavished in this country on infants and children. One may almost say that the soul of this virile race is withdrawn from all else only to be emptied and poured on these 'little ones'. Men perhaps are more tender towards them than women. Often these children and young boys and girls carry a cross in their little hearts owing to the strained relations between their parents, and sometimes they are potent means of reconciliation between them.

A great deal is being done by both parents and the nation for the proper education of children and young people, and new and costly experiments are being made all the time. Researches are carried on to such an extent, and so much attention is being paid and money spent in the field of education, that the educationists of the world are not without reason looking for guidance and help from the United States. But as a humble student and observer of life, I might say that the great need is to lay the foundations of their marvellous edifice of education deep down in the spirit of reverence—reverence for the parent, for the teacher, for those who are older than oneself. One of the most beautiful sights I saw, in the United States, however, was the tender love and respect with which an American friend of mine, an ex-missionary from India, regarded his old mother, and I felt

that it was something of which even a Hindu, who is well-known for such reverence, might well be proud. In spite of all the differences between one people and another, one wonders if human nature is not much the same everywhere.

YOUTHFULNESS OF THE NATION

If I be asked to name the outstanding characteristic of the American people, I would say it is their youthfulness. This country is as young in spirit as it is in age. It is doubtful, however, if the same could be said of Canada or Australia. At any rate, these countries have not become self-conscious and it is the essential quality of youthfulness to be conscious of itself. This youthfulness is a national characteristic, and it is reflected everywhere. There is a buoyancy of life here which defies age and makes old people young. It is the philosophy of life which is largely responsible for this. Of course this philosophy bears a close relation to the soil and circumstances in which it has grown and they both act and react upon each other. This is something very like what had happened in India in the early stages of the Aryan settlement. There is no note of pessimism in the early Vedic hymns,—a note which became so common in later times. The Rishis, *i.e.*, the sages and seers, then believed in the full employment and enjoyment of all the powers of nature and man, and in living the full span of life which was not less than a hundred years. This has its counter-part in the United States in the rise of such teachers as Emerson and Walt Whitman and in such semi-philosophical movements as New Thought and Christian Science. Even the orthodox Christian Church

has not remained unaffected by this, and all negative ideas such as those of old age, disease, poverty, death, etc., are almost universally, by tacit consent as it were, kept out of the scheme of thought and life. The peculiar quality of American idealism has its origin in this youthfulness of spirit, the idealism which inspires keen interest in the heart of an average American in great causes all over the world and gives rise to world-embracing charities at the hands of its multi-millionaires.

Some of the defects of this country which are too glaring to escape the notice of even a casual visitor are also due to the same spirit of youthfulness. Its sex-obsession is a national vice on a large scale. The awful titles alone of the movies and the talkies, each worse than the other, and the huge posters representing some of the scenes, not to talk of the pictures themselves, are sufficient to show the degeneracy of the public taste which is not only not shocked by such things but almost revels in them. There is a levelling down of social life in regard to marriage especially, and divorce has become too common in almost all strata of life to cause any shock or flutter.

The machine civilisation which has taken such a firm hold of this country is characterised by a fastness which has penetrated all life. There is a general loosening of all ties, and friendships are difficult to form. People are volatile, and where everything is changing and moving so fast, friends and partners in life also are apt to change too soon. Another ugly feature of this machine-ridden life is the spirit of violence that resides in this civilization. One of the first

painful surprises I had was to see how lightly dreadful accidents involving deaths of people were taken by both men and women. The people seemed to take these things as a matter of course, and this was because people had got used to them by a too frequent occurrence of such accidents. Things that would cause real horror in India seemed to leave the American people altogether cold. There are no less than forty thousand deaths from automobile accidents in the land every year and an equal number of murders, some of them committed under most awful conditions. During the months I was there, I read of several instances wherein a father or mother killed the whole of his or her family numbering once or twice seven or eight persons, and that too in a most gruesome manner or in cold blood. The number of suicides is about the same as that of murders, a fact which testifies to the deep restlessness of the people.

If I am not mistaken, of all civilized countries America stands first in the toll of life she is paying in all these matters, and that is most serious matter for all her thoughtful men and women to consider. All this is strangely anomalous with the fact that during my stay over a year I rarely witnessed a quarrel and did not even once hear loud speaking. A Hindu friend of mine had the same experience and he significantly added that to witness such things one had to go to the talkies. He also said that things were so ordered because of this very machine civilization that one rarely had occasion to lose one's temper. Is it then in the nature of things that this machine civilization which is so considerate about individual

comfort should be so reckless of other's good as to destroy life on a large scale and to breed social disintegration and violence?

The spirit of advertisement is another national vice of people. They have carried the art of advertisement in business to perfection, and the spirit of it has pervaded everything that the American thinks or does. From the President down to the commonest man everybody seems to be affected by it. Thus the ethics and methods of the market are imported into the academies and the churches. Because of this, life here wears an aspect of inflation as nowhere else. Everything has to seem larger and better than it really is and thus the art of *seeming* has been sedulously cultivated much to the detriment of *being*. Not only is humility at a discount but bombast is recognised as legitimate. One of the very first things I heard when I set my foot on the Canadian soil was that the difference between the Canadians and the people of the United States lay primarily in the bombast of the latter. I heard the same criticism in England. Evidently foreigners resent this boastfulness which has become a national vice and has formed a part of the mental make up of the American so that very often he is unconscious of it.

The so-called American hypocrisy bears a very close relation to this national habit. Of course this is a thing in which no nation can throw stones at another. I found that the British had the same reputation on the continent, whereas the fact was that in things in which they were considered hypocritical by the French for example, the latter's behaviour

was much worse on the whole though of an opposite kind. There is, however, a wide divergence between the avowed profession and practice of the people in such matters as Prohibition etc., which has rightly given colour to this charge. But I found the climax of this hypocrisy reached in a super-scription which has become more than a national motto and which is placed in a setting which brings out completely the hollowness of the sentiment expressed therein. Success and achievement are the divinities at the shrine of which most Americans worship, and to a large extent this success is measured by the amount of wealth a man has. Evidently this is the genesis of the phrase *the Almighty Dollar*. But the irony of it all comes out in the words which every silver dollar or half-dollar bears, I mean the words "IN GOD WE TRUST".

Has this country found its soul yet? I asked this question of many people in the States, of people who have lived here for more than two or four decades but failed to find any satisfactory answer. Many of them frankly said that they doubted if it had any soul of its own yet. I was told that it had not yet had a culture of its own, let alone the soul. A very thoughtful Austrian girl said to me: "These people here have our civilization, but not our culture and we feel stultified when our culture is attri-

buted to them." This lack of a great original culture and of soul is due to the fact that the American people have gone through not a single national travail while several such are needed for the soul of a nation to be born. Life is easy, too easy here, and people know neither suffering, nor poverty, nor renunciation which are things essential for a great culture to be borne.

Nevertheless the soul of America is being born slowly and steadily though imperceptibly, and while I am writing this there rises before me the marvellous womanhood of this country arrayed in its singular beauty of person and manner and culture of both mind and heart, and I feel sure that a country which can produce women such as these will not wait long for the attainment of the full stature on the part of its soul. We were three of us in one of the rooms in a hospital in one of the cities of the States, myself, an American Jew, who is a scholar and a fine American woman. We were talking about this very subject when the Jew said pointing to the woman, "she is the soul of America." Yes, it is the good and noble women of this land whose number is legion who represent its soul and who are generating a new culture and a new spirit that will not only be a boon and a blessing to this country but to all the world.

(Concluded)

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

तत् तु विषयत्यागात् सङ्गत्यागाच्च ॥ ३५ ॥

तत् That (The Prema and Amrita referred to in Sutras 2 & 3) तु but विषयत्यागात् by giving up the objective reality of the world as it appears to an ego-centric intellect सङ्गत्यागात् by renunciation of attachment च and.

35. But¹ that state of supreme Love and Immortality is made possible only by giving up the objective² reality of the world as it appears to the ego-centric intellect and senses, and³ the consequent renunciation of attachment.

Notes. 1. *But*—This word is meant to suggest that the Sutra is an answer to a possible Purvapaksha 'or objection. The objection may be stated thus :—If the highest realisation is only a kind of love, why not begin practice by loving such objects in the world as are pleasure-giving and attractive, and if the highest realisation is only a kind of happiness or bliss, why not begin by trying to enjoy as much sensual happiness as possible. The Sutra answers that such procedure is dangerous and risky and is based on false premises.

2. *Objective reality*—So long as one is alive, one cannot refuse to see

the objective world, nor is it possible for one to escape it however much one may try to run away from it. But one can refuse to consider it as the real. Vedanta recognises three grades of reality—the Paramarthika, the Vyavaharika and the Pratibhasika. The world conjured up by a magician belongs to the third class. The reality of the objects of the world as they appear to us in our ordinary life belongs to the second class. Only the reality of God is Paramarthika. Reality depends upon indestructibility under any circumstances. The magician's world vanishes at the end of the performance, and the world of ordinary waking state disappears in sleep. These cannot be considered as really real, but only apparently real for the time being. Only God or Atman, which forms the substratum of all objective phenomena, exists eternally, without in the least forgoing its real nature under any circumstances, and in all states of consciousness. To know this ephemeral nature of all objective phenomena is what is meant by Vishayatyaaga. In the earlier stages, this can be practised only by actually abandoning as worthless all objects that excite and tempt the lower mind. Sri Ramakrishna brings all these objects under his formula of 'sex and wealth' or 'woman and gold'. This renunciation of the object itself is necessary only in the

early stages, and need be practised only with reference to objects which are capable of causing attachment and bondage. The Sannyasa Ashrama represents the highest stage of this form of Sadhana, where man has to retire from the world altogether. All casts of gift, Brahmacharya, austerities, etc., represent this renunciation of objects in the earlier stages.

Practice of this renunciation of the objects of senses must be voluntary and not forced. Thus the poor man does not in the least benefit by his giving up food on any day, because he is compelled to do it. Neither does the patient who is prevented from taking ordinary food, or, he who is segregated from his family for consideration of health. The renunciation in these cases are not voluntary. There must be the capacity and possibility of enjoying the object; only voluntary surrender of such an object constitutes true renunciation. This renunciation of objects should not also be carried to absurd lengths, as in the case of many ascetics who practise self-torture for its own sake. Such extreme asceticism is a disease which has its root in some aberration of the mind, and one who is addicted to it is a fit subject for psycho-analytic treatment. What constitutes such extreme cases is to be judged from the circumstances of each case.

Examples of Janaka, Ramananda Roy, Pundarika Vidyanidhi, Vidyananya, etc., are often cited by worldly-minded people as authority for convincing themselves that there is no real necessity to practise this kind of renunciation. These examples are rather exceptions that prove the rule, and are in fact not fit to be taken as models to be followed by a

beginner who runs the risk of getting entangled in the meshes of Maya. These instances only prove the fact that when one has attained Para Bhakti or highest realisation, one need not be a practitioner of this form of Sadhana. From that time worldly objects will not have the power of tempting him from the path of virtue and love of God. Only they who have reached this stage can feel themselves safe from temptation. Cf. Kumara Sambhava, Canto I, Verse 59, which says, 'They alone are heroes whose hearts will not yield to temptation: cf. also the story of the devil's temptation of Jesus and Buddha's temptation by Mara. But to the novice, it is safer to keep out of temptation. Thus Bhishma says in Shantiparva of Mahabharata, Chapter CLXXX, Slokas 30, 33: "There is no possibility of desire arising in a man who does not know the pleasureableness of an object. And this pleasureableness is known only by actual contact with it by sight, touch, hearing, etc. Safer it is therefore for a man not to enjoy or see or touch such objects."

Again it is often advocated by people who cannot give up worldly enjoyments that these enjoyments are required as a necessary prelude to renunciation, since only such enjoyment leading to a satiation could put down the desire for enjoyment once for all. This also is a dangerous doctrine. For never is it possible to suppress desire by enjoyment. Says the Mahabharata as well as Manu II, 94, "Desires are never quenched by enjoyment. It rather inflames them all the more as ghee only inflames fire and does not put it out." Therefore says the Yogavasishtha, Nirvanaprakaranam,

Chapter LXXVII, St. 81 and 83: "The slightest desire must be nipped in the bud by abstinence as it otherwise leads to perdition, just as one would destroy the sprout of a poison tree. Hook the fish of desire by abstinence."

3. *And renunciation of all attachment*—This part of the Sutra is very important. It shows that mere renunciation of an object of enjoyment is not sufficient, unless it is accompanied by a renunciation of all attachment to it mentally. If objects of enjoyments are given up by force, it is repression, and it would lead to all kinds of evil consequences, described in detail by psycho-analysts. In Gita III, 6 and 7 it is pointed out that

mere renunciation of objects of enjoyment externally, while all the time mentally enjoying them, is a kind of false practice of renunciation, and that it is far better to renounce all attachments mentally even while enjoying them externally.

Thus Narada is an advocate of renunciation both external and mental, and he has the support of Santiparva 192.17 which also speaks of the necessity for both kinds of renunciation. Of these two, the former is necessary only in the preliminary stages, while the latter is necessary at all times.

This external and mental renunciation forms the basis of many of the spiritual practices advocated by all religions.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Srimad Bhagavatam (Sanskrit) : Published by V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons, 202, Esplanade, Madras. Vols. I & II. Pp. 2216 Cro. 8 Vo. Price Rs. 6-8-9.

Bhagavata has come down to us from the shining past as a living book of perennial interest. It has soaked into the religious mind of the nation, and its appeal is profound to all persons who approach it, be they predominantly emotional, intellectual or dynamic. The essence of all scriptures, Vedas, Upanishads, Gita and the like, are submerged in it. Besides, it is a perfect piece of art standing quite apart in style, diction, form, spirit and even metre. A sensitive, profound, highly erudite and immaculately pure mind alone could plumb its depths; but its sweet sanctifying aroma can be enjoyed by any devout heart. It has a wonderful efficacy to sustain the reverent mind at red-hot devotional fervour through the marvellous array of divine hymns, mystic revelations, philosophic reflections, didactic dialogues, ethical lessons, picturesque descriptions, arresting narrations and idyllic scenes. Quite naturally therefore, even at the present day, in hundreds of places experts expound this

thrilling text to enthusiastic throngs of expectant hearers; and translations and commentaries in the spoken tongues are produced in addition to the already existing forest of Sanskrit commentaries representing every Vaishnava school. Scores of editions in almost all Indian scripts are in the market, as it may be well expected in view of its primacy and popularity.

The above edition is an advance upon all the existing editions of the text in one respect or other. We are convinced that it is the most convenient, attractive and modestly priced edition of the text we have come across. In this edition all octosyllabic verses are printed each distich below the other, and verses of longer metres in four lines; words and lines are well spaced, and there is an ample margin of white space outlying the printed region to relieve, refresh and delight the readers' plodding eyes. Though the Nirṇaya Sagar text may hold its own for cheapness, this one is easily superior to it in typographical arrangement; and this edition has fewer misprints than the Madhava Vilas text which is printed in bolder attractive type. However, we note that in this text, although it is claimed to

be critical, the MSS. used are not indicated as scientific scholarship would expect. Again, we think, collation with some other North Indian edition, e.g., the Brindaban edition, would have given it better readings in some places. Nevertheless this edition, though we do not claim anything like ideal perfection for it, is a protest against the slovenly and awkward way of printing lengthwise on strips of paper a foot and a half long (perhaps due to the force of orthodox prejudice and inexorable conservatism) everything solid, without pause or space, dovetailing the final consonants into the initial letters of succeeding words even where no euphonic law demands it, thus complicating the few positions in which the Devanagari characters can represent simple sounds as the Roman without violence—and to add to it all, neglecting to put up a contents and index or even to punctuate properly. We heartily recommend this very good edition to all who go in for a Bhagavatam text. Here is value enough for the money paid.

Shakespeare Criticism: *By C. Narayana Menon, M.A., Ph.D. Published by Oxford University Press, Amen House, London, E.C. 4. Cloth Bound Price Rs. 3. Pages 276.*

Among English authors there is perhaps none who has drawn the attention of so many critics and admirers as Shakespeare. In India his hold over the minds of literary men continues undisputed. Every cultured Indian feels that, even though Shakespeare was a foreigner, he is as much his own as Kalidasa. This is undoubtedly due to the universality of Shakespeare's genius.

It is perhaps due to this nearness of Shakespeare to the universal human heart, in which there is no difference between East and West, that an Indian Professor like Dr. Menon has been able to enter so deeply into his literary and dramatic art, and produce a work that deserves a place among the best books on Shakespearean criticism from the pen of noted English writers.

The author says that the purpose of the book is to show that almost everything written on Shakespeare is true.

Shakespeare, he admits, was not original; but the duty of an artist is not to be original, but to help us realise 'the indestructible prototyp preserved in our minds'. What beauty does is to revive old memories. The poet is a creator only in the sense that his individual imagination coincides with the cosmic. Because this is more true of Shakespeare than of other poets, critics have found in him an inexhaustible reserve of thoughts and beauties. This is not to say that they read more into him than is right. For if critics turn to writers of lesser genius they will not find there the opportunities for this deeper analysis.

Dr. Menon points out that the great plays of Shakespeare can be duly appreciated only by one who has got the capacity to identify oneself in imagination with the principal characters.

What is expected of a true critic is a dynamic response. To approach a Shakespearean drama as a stage-manager or a scholar would be the best way to tamper with imaginative identification. One would then be more aware of the stage-carpenter, the actor and the ulterior motives of the writer than of the characters of the play. Hindu philosophy holds that in relation to the universe, God is not only the Spectator but also the Actor inasmuch as He is the reality behind all appearance. Similarly, when we appreciate a great play we become both spectator and actor. In appreciating 'Lear', 'we do not see Lear but become Lear'.

In regard to the plays and characters taken for analysis and illustrations, the author confines himself mainly to the great tragedies; for the genius of Shakespeare flowered mainly in his tragedies. "The kernel" says the writer, "of every Shakespearean play—tragedy, comedy, or history—is the potential in us. Hamlet and Falstaff are the obverse and the reverse of the same medal. When the emotional stress is shifted from the centre to the circumference and from the circumference to a point outside this design, tragedy changes into comedy and history."

It is interesting to note the following observations of the author summarising the moral of Shakespearean plays: "Do we, after witnessing tragedy, feel that the

quintessence of Shakespeare is this: Don't expect woman to be chaste (Hamlet, Othello), politics to be pure (Brutus), or children and friends to be grateful (Lear, Timon), for it is not their duty to be so? To suggest that one should avoid suffering by renouncing one's ideals is like proposing that the cure of life's ills is to refuse to live..... The bull challenges his father and even kills him; the commandment, 'Honour thy father', is written only on the tablets of the human heart. It is harder to live like men than to vegetate,

but it is also nobler. Arctic explorers and even Everest climbers incur suffering and risk; so in the world of values—the exploration of which is more essential for the welfare of the race—a Lear or a Hamlet prospers his lonely way."

These extracts will give an idea of Dr. Menon's penetrating insight into Shakespeare's thought, and also of the simple, forceful and beautiful English style he wields. It is a delight to go through Dr. Menon's book, both as a piece of literature and as a piece of literary criticism.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Ramakrishna Mission Relief Work

In the week ending with 6—10—1938, 110 mds. 14 srs. of rice were distributed among 3,011 recipients belonging to 49 villages from the Ramakrishna Mission relief centres at Silna and Nijra, centres in the Gopalgunj Sub-division of the Faridpur District, besides 1 md. of salt and 213 new pieces of cloth and 422 old clothes.

In the week ending 9—10—38, 21 mds. 23 srs. of rice were distributed among 424 recipients of 15 villages from Pare-hnathpur, Kedarchandpur and Sarbangapur centres in the Sadar Sub-division of the Murshidabad District. Inspection of villages and enlisting of recipients are being continued.

We shall require not less than Rs. 850 per week for the relief work in both the areas, besides a few thousand pieces of cloth for the most needy. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by (1) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P.O., Howrah Dt., (2) President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Mylapore, Madras.

The Report of Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalyam, Periyanaickenpalayam (Coimbatore Dt.) for the year 1937

The general enthusiasm to correct and supplement our existing system of education is shared foremost by institutions like the Vidyalyam, which are run on Gurukula lines in suitable rural surroundings with the full intent on the uplift of the rural population. The strength of this residential school for the reported year was 92

and the Rural Service Section of the Vidyalyam extended its beneficial activities to outlying villages. The Vidyalyam has a decidedly vocational bias; every day two periods of 40 minutes are devoted to the training of the eyes and the hands of the boys through productive labour; the subjects chosen at present being tailoring, carpentry and spinning and carding. The boys are being trained in habits of self-help, self-reliance and co-operative work by affording them opportunity to manage the day to day function of the school to a large measure through their own executive committee and court. The Rural Service Section is doing valuable work through study circles, Library, summer school, lantern lectures, slack-season school, medical aid, sports and rural exhibitions. The receipts for 1937 were Rs. 22,644-12-2 of which the balance sheet shows Rs. 8,928-10-4, and the budget for 1938 on the items of school, building, boarding and rural service is Rs. 23,490 towards which contributions are earnestly solicited by the management.

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Surgachi, Murshidabad Report for 1937

This report embodies the work of the above institution since its inception in 1938. It was started by His Holiness Sri-mat Swami Akhandanandajee Maharaj, the late president of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission with the object of relieving the sufferings of the rural people. The different activities commenced by him

with this end in view are being carried on by the present management along the line chalked out by the revered founder. It is one of those pioneer institutions started in the whole of India with similar motives; and we may say that it anticipated far ahead the interest in the rural population so much talked of in the present day.

The activities of the Ashrama fall under:

- (1) Orphanage, (2) Free Upper-primary School, (3) Night School, (4) Industrial School, (5) Charitable dispensary, (6) Preaching work, (7) Temporary Relief and (8) arrangement of religious festivals.

From the statement of accounts it is noted that its financial position is far from being satisfactory. If only more funds are forthcoming, the serious handicap under which the Free primary school and the charitable dispensary at present labours could be removed. The management will thankfully receive and acknowledge any contribution from the sympathetic public specified for the purpose.

The Report of the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch), Wellawatta, Colombo, for the years 1935-37.

The noteworthy events in connection with this centre for the year 1935-36 are the opening of the new Math building, Jerbai Memorial Hall, and the inaugural functions of Sri Ramakrishna Birthday Centenary celebrations. The Math section carried on as usual its work of ministering to the spiritual needs of the public by conducting regular weekly classes through the resident Swamis, and by organising extensive tours for preaching the message of Vedanta. Religious festivals and birthday anniversaries of religious prophets were also held for creating religious fervour among the people. During the year under review, 3 English and 9 Tamil schools with 78 teachers and 2,326 pupils were conducted by the Mission. The Orphanage, which is a Students' Home rendered educational help to 48 orphans and destitute children.

The activities of the year 1936-37 (upto June 1937) include among others the happy concluding functions of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary celebrations. The Ashram organised a convention of Religions, which was attended with signal success. Celebrations were held in several

other places through the efforts of the workers of the Mission, and public were much benefited by the programme of special Puja, devotional music and lectures on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The regular work of cultural and religions ministrations was carried on by the resident Swamis who conducted scripture classes every week. The Ashram organised special religious lectures by inviting some of the delegates of the Parliament of Religions held at Calcutta.

The educational activities of the Mission continued with unabated enthusiasm. The addition of 3 more schools marked the expansion of work. During the year under review 15 schools were conducted with 84 teachers and 2624 pupils. The Rural Reconstruction Centre, an offshoot of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary celebration, worked well with the help and co-operation of the sympathetic public. This well-organised work of the mission serving the public amidst an ever-increasing demand could not with its slender financial resources meet the needs fully and effectively. So it stands in urgent need of funds. To consolidate its educational and rural reconstruction work on a strong financial basis, the management looks up to the sympathetic public for help of every kind.

The Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Bankura, for 1937

This centre of the Mission is in existence for 28 years. In the reported year the Charitable Dispensary, which forms a chief medium of service of the centre, rendered medical aid to 85,008 patients as against 74,699 of the previous year. The monastic side of the work consisted of Puja, festivals, celebrations of anniversaries, management of library, preaching and scriptural classes. Besides the Dispensary work, famine and flood relief as well as other sundry works of help were also undertaken. The total receipts for the year were Rs. 2,772-5-3 and expenditure Rs. 2,279-5-3. The management appeals for funds towards the extension of the workers' quarters as well as for enhancing the efficiency of the medical relief.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—*Suami Vivekananda*

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXV]

DECEMBER, 1938

[No. 8

HINDU ETHICS

हृदि यदि भगवाननादिरास्ते हरिरसिशङ्खगदाधरोऽव्ययात्मा
तदधमघविघातकर्तृभिर्भवं भवति कथं सति चान्धकारमर्के ॥
हरति परधनं निहन्ति जन्तून् वदति तथामृतनिष्ठुराणि यश्च
अशुभजनितदुर्मदस्य पुंसः कलुषमतेर्हृदि तस्य नास्त्यनन्तः ॥
न सहति परसम्पदं विनिन्दां कलुषमतिः कुरुते सतामसाधुः
न यजति न ददाति यश्च सन्तं मनसि न तस्य जनार्दनोऽधमस्य ॥
परमसुहृदि बान्धवे कलत्रे सुततनयापितृमातृभृत्यवर्गे
शठमतिरुपयाति योऽर्थतृष्णां तमधमचेष्टमवेहि नास्य भक्तम् ॥
अशुभमतिरसत्यवृत्तिसक्तः सततमनार्थकुशीलसङ्गमतः
अनुदिनकृतपापबन्धयुक्तः पुरुषपशुर्नहि वासुदेवभक्तः ॥

If the beginningless Hari, whose is perfect lordship, knowledge, glory, prosperity, mercy and dispassion, and who is the immutable Self of all, resides in the heart, wielding divine weapons and obstructing the inroads of vice, how can there be any sin? Can darkness lurk in broad day-light? But the Infinite Being does not manifest Himself in evil-minded persons who strip others of their property, utter rankling falsehood, slay animals and are filled with malignant pride begotten of sin. Such vile persons burn at heart for others' prosperity, rail at good men, worship no God and never give in charity although they possess ample. The heart of the depraved is not the throne of God. He who is perverse, basely-behaved and is in the habit of subjecting to hardships the best friends, relatives, wife, son, daughter, father, mother and servants through greed of wealth—know him to be far from being a devotee of the Lord. The man of evil intent given to wicked deeds, perpetually addicted to the company of characterless, uncultured chums and fast bound by the series of sins perpetrated day after day, is certainly not a man but a beast. Assuredly he is no lover of Him.

—*Vishnu Purana.*

SPIRITUAL LIFE: THE LAWS OF ITS GROWTH—II

[In this and the ensuing issues for the year, we shall publish a series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna's views on the fundamental problems of spiritual life, based on his recorded sayings. In the course of these studies we shall also have occasion to take a passing view of many questions of absorbing interest in modern life and thought. 'Spiritual Life: Laws of its Growth—II' forms the eighth of the series.]

I

IN the last instalment we made a brief survey of many teachings of the Master on the mental and moral laws governing spiritual growth. In the following paragraphs too we are considering the same subject, especially in reference to the higher levels of spiritual life.

According to the Master, the most fundamental law governing higher development in spiritual life is faith. Knowledge relating to God, says he, keeps pace with faith. When there is little faith, it is idle to look for much knowledge. The cow which comes to be over-nice in matters of eating is not liberal in the supply of milk. But the cow which welcomes all kinds of food—herbs, leaves, grass, husks, straw and the rest—and eats them up with great relish, yields plenty of milk. Her milk comes down into the pail in torrents.

The following is a significant event that sheds light on the Master's conception of faith. A disciple once spoke of faith disparagingly as 'blind faith' in the Master's presence. The Master thereupon remarked: "Well, can you explain to me what you mean by 'blind faith'? Is not faith wholly 'blind'? What again are its eyes? Say either 'faith' or 'knowledge'. Or else, what is this queer notion that faith in some instances is 'blind' and in others 'with eyes'?"

It appears from this that faith is an energy of the soul, a variety of unconscious and unlearned, but withal unerring, wisdom like instinct. Its worth is to be measured by the standard of purity attained by the soul in whom it manifests. Our conceptions regarding the ultimate truth are distorted and even dictated by the constitution of our mind. Often we come across people who say that they do not believe in God and higher life because these cannot be proved. With very rare exceptions—and these exceptions can be easily found out from their terrible earnestness and one-pointed devotion to truth—the general run of atheists and agnostics are so, not because of convictions born of an earnest quest, but because of convenience and the impulsion of their desires. Their minds are full of hankerings for the enjoyment of the flesh, and this blinds their vision and their imaginative faculty to all other aspects of existence save what is conducive to the satisfaction of these cravings. Thus, their view of truth is as much based upon faith as that of the pious soul, with, however, this difference. The wordly-minded atheists and agnostics have the light of their soul distorted and discoloured by their impure desires. In the case of a true devotee, the mind is comparatively free from such desires and proportionately free from these

distortions and discolourations. As a result the luminous energy of his soul shines as faith in God and in man's spiritual destiny. Hence the Master says : " Indeed, till the heart becomes pure, one cannot even believe in the existence of God." Faith, as pointed out here, is only the unconscious or semi-conscious urge of truth, unerring in its effect but not possessing the potency of a direct contact in regard to its source and object. This is so because the film of desires and the shell of ego have not been completely penetrated. When this is done, faith matures into knowledge or full luminosity. Faith and Knowledge are not therefore contradictories but complimentary developments, in spite of their difference in quality. This difference consists in the emergent quality of patency inherent in Knowledge. In other words faith is an indirect pre-vision of Truth, and Knowledge a direct vision of it.

Allied to faith in God is faith in the Guru or the spiritual guide and preceptor. According to the Master, a Guru is necessary in the case of the generality of men. When going to a strange country, one must abide by the directions of a guide who knows the way. Taking the advice of many would lead to utter confusion. So in trying to reach God one must follow implicitly the advice of a single Guru who knows the way to God. But there is no need of anyone troubling about finding out a Guru. For if one is in right earnest to learn about the mysteries of God, He will send the right teacher to such an aspirant. In the case of aspirants whose sincerity and yearning for God are very intense, there may be no necessity for a Guru. But such

yearning and sincerity are very rare. Hence the necessity of Guru.

Faith in Guru is inculcated on the basis of the theory that it is the illuminating power of God which, out of mercy for the faithful disciple, manifests itself through a competent teacher leading a holy life. Hence a man who is full of faith does not regard his Guru as a mere man. "Before the disciple realises the Deity," says the Master, "he sees the Guru in the first dawn of Divine illumination, and it is the Guru who afterwards reveals the Deity, transforming himself mysteriously into the form of the Deity.

"There are sayings of the Master wherein he seems to subscribe to the doctrine of indiscriminate, uncritical and absolute obedience to the Guru as expressed in the popular saying: "Though my Guru may visit the tavern, still he is holy Rai Nityananda." This should not, however, be taken to mean that the Master supports the various abuses of Guruism prevalent in our country. In fact no one has condemned false teachers as vehemently as he has done. A spiritual teacher, he says, should have the badge of authority, which consists in a godly life and Divine realisation. Only then can his teaching be effective. An unworthy teacher who undertakes to save another is like a water-snake trying to devour a big frog. It fails to swallow the frog, and in the attempt only injures the creature and itself too. In the same way an incompetent Guru only ruins himself and others. Thus the Master warns people against the dangers from false Gurus. In the case of his own disciples he encouraged those of them who were critically minded 'to

test him as the money-changer tests a coin', before accepting him. Hence when the Master says, "Though my Guru visits the tavern, still he is holy Rai Nityananda", his purpose is not to encourage the indiscretions and abuses of Guruism. He only points to the exalted ideal of faith that spiritual aspirants of the highest order possess.

He illustrates this high level of faith from an incident in Sri Chaitanya's life. On seeing the mud of which drums used in devotional music are made, Chaitanya was lost in ecstasy, because the very association of the mud with devotional music filled his mind with Divine fervour. Likewise, when one has true devotion to the Guru, he will be reminded of the Guru on seeing the Guru's relatives or even villagers, and his mind will be lost in an ecstasy of devotion. "At this stage," says the Master, "the disciple fails to see any defect in the Guru. Now only he can say, 'Even if my Guru frequents the taverns, he is the Lord, Eternal Bliss, all the same.' Otherwise, a human being cannot but be a mixture of virtues and vices. But the disciple, on account of his devotion, no longer sees man as man but as God Himself, just as one sees everything yellow if he has jaundice. His devotion then reveals to Him that God alone is everything."

Genuine faith in God and the Guru engenders resignation to the Divine will. For it is a necessary accompaniment of it. The state of absolute resignation is like the condition of a labourer reclining on a pillow after fatiguing work. It is the cessation of all anxieties and worries. The man of resignation is like a kitten. The

kitten knows only to mew piteously, and the mother grasps it by the neck and carries it about. It has no risk of a fall. So is a man of true resignation guided safely by the grace of God.

It should, however, be carefully borne in mind that resignation does not mean idleness or moral irresponsibility. For the decision to remain inactive is as much due to egotism as the activities undertaken by the worldly-minded. By resignation is not therefore meant either activity or inactivity, but an attitude of complete trust in the Divine as the initiator and sustainer of all actions done through one's instrumentality. As for moral lapse and irresponsibility, they are the sure indications that a person's resignation is a mere hypocritical profession. Says the Master: "Duryodhana also said, 'O Lord, Thou abidest in my heart, and I do as Thou makest me do.' But he who really believes that God is the doer and that he himself is only an instrument, cannot commit any sin. A perfect dancer never takes a wrong step. Indeed, until the heart becomes pure one cannot even believe in the existence of God."

II

As important as faith and resignation are the allied virtues of discrimination and dispassion (Viveka and Vairagya), in the development of spiritual life. Describing the nature of these, the Master says: "Viveka means the sifting of the real from the unreal; and Vairagya, dispassion for the objects of the world. 'Woman and gold' are both unreal; the only reality is God. Of what use is money? Why, it gives us food and clothing

and a place to live in. Thus far it is useful, and no further. Surely you cannot see God with the help of money. Money is certainly not the end of life. What again is there in the beauty of the human body. Using your discrimination you shall find that the body of even the most beautiful woman is made up of flesh and blood, skin and bones, fat and marrow, nay, as in the case of other animals, of entrails, of urine, excreta and the rest. The wonder is that man can lose sight of God and give his mind entirely to things of this nature." Such searching criticism of a few objects of the world would reveal to one the real nature of all worldly objects—their triviality and transitoriness—just as the testing of a few grains of rice from the cooking pot would show whether the whole rice is boiled or not.

As in the case of all spiritual disciplines, this process of discrimination has also to be practised with perseverance until it leaves a permanent impression on the mind and alters the mind's natural habits of thought and evaluation. In fact the Master always insists on the absolute necessity of slow and persistent practice of disciplines. He used to say that even Sri Krishna underwent tremendous spiritual practices connected with the worship of Radha Yantra. The fruition of one's effort would, however, depend upon the strength of one's faith; for where there is perfect faith a little practice is enough. The faith in the power of the Lord's name will itself set all doubts at rest and purify the mind even without much discrimination and devotional practices. This, however, is the case only with exceptional men. In others, just

as the fire made by burning bamboo is soon extinguished unless kept alive by constant blowing, the fire of spirituality will die out in the absence of constant practice.

The Master says that practice is of three kinds, *viz.*, of the nature of birds, of the nature of monkeys, and of the nature of ants. The first two stand for different degrees of violence and hurry in devotional practices. The devotees coming under this category often get frustrated in their attempts just as a bird that a bird violently pecks at, or a fruit that a monkey carries in the mouth while jumping from branch to branch, may at any time fall down. But the ant creeps gently and steadily carrying its food, and enjoys the same comfortably in its hole. The aspirant resembling the ant is the best; for there is sureness of attaining and enjoying the fruit. Genuine aspirants of this type evince much patience, and are never deterred by delay or temporary failures. They are like anglers who would wait for hours in order to hook a big fish. They are like hereditary peasants who do not give up their profession of agriculture even if it does not rain for twelve years.

Besides discrimination, there are other spiritual disciplines too which the Master recommends to aspirants for slow and steady practice, for attaining higher development in spiritual life. Among these, the most important are Japa (repetition of the Divine 'names') and meditation. The repetition of Divine 'names', especially with a feeling of delight in it, is one of the most effective forms of spiritual practice. By chanting the 'name' of the Lord with devotion

even a mountain of sins vanishes as a mountain of cotton burns to ashes and disappears if a spark of fire falls on it. If one continues to repeat the Divine 'name' with concentration and devotion, one is sure to have the Divine vision ultimately. Suppose a big log of wood is immersed in the Ganges, and to one end of it is attached a chain, of which the other extremity is fixed on the bank. If you follow the chain, holding it link by link, you can gradually dive into the water and trace your way to it along the course of the chain. So also if one becomes absorbed in the repetition of the holy 'name', one will eventually realise Him.

By repeating the Divine 'name' with concentration, one's mind is gradually taken to that state of complete absorption known as meditation. Then the mind is diluted in the Lord as the crude medicine is diluted in spirit. The breath gets suspended, the senses of perception automatically close themselves to all stimuli, the mind becomes filled with intense love of God, and the real nature of the object of meditation gets infused into the mind of the meditator. A person has become perfect in meditation, if on sitting down to meditate, he becomes immediately surrounded with a divine atmosphere and his soul communes with God.

III

Such an advanced state of meditation would, however, come to one only if the mind is full of dispassion for the world and longing for God. These qualities in turn are the final fruits of the steady practice of discrimination and all the other disciplines that have been mentioned before. Dis-

passion is the firm conviction that everything in the world, from the humble position of a scavenger to the dignified position of the king, are trivial in nature, and a readiness on that account to sacrifice body, mind and riches in the pursuit of the Divine. It is the supreme purifying agent for the mind as alum is for muddy water.

Dispassion alone can give one that peace of mind required for earnest spiritual practice. A kite carrying a fish is chased by crows and other kites. But when, tired of this annoyance, it throws away the fish, the chasing birds leave it, and follow the kite that happens to catch the discarded fish. The first kite then sits calm and tranquil on the branch of a tree. In the same way unless a man throws away the burden of worldly desires, he cannot have the peace of mind for following the spiritual path.

Dispassion is of two kinds—moderate and intense. Moderate dispassion is slow and procrastinating, and there is no knowing when it will become mature. Intense dispassion is like digging a large tank in one night. There is vehemence in it, and the longing for God in one having it, is unadulterated by any worldly ambition. To him the world appears to be a well wherein he fears he may be drowned any moment. His relations seem to him as so many venomous serpents from whom he is inclined to fly away. And such is the strength of his impulse and determination that he never thinks even of setting his domestic affairs before taking to the path of God.

With the growth of dispassion there develops the allied virtue of a steady and intense yearning for God. This yearning for God is the culmination

of all spiritual endeavours; for as the glow of dawn heralds the rising sun, intense yearning is the sure sign that one will have the Divine realisation very soon. Look at the little child. So long as it remains engrossed in play with the toys, the mother engages herself in cooking and other household work; but when the little one finds no more satisfaction in toys, throws them aside and weeps with a loud cry for the mother, the mother can no longer remain in the kitchen. She drops down the rice pot, perhaps, from the hearth, and runs in hot haste to the child and takes it up in her arms. So does the Divine Mother behave towards the aspirant yearning for Her.

But the yearning must be intense. Both in his teachings and in his life the Master has set a striking example of this, unprecedented in history. In his life this craving was manifest as something organic with his personality, absorbing all the energies of the body, mind and soul in its intensity. Describing the intensity of it as felt by him, he compares it to the need for air that a man held under water experiences. "Do you know how intense our longing for God should be?" asks the Master. "The love that a devoted wife possesses for her

husband, the attachment that a miser feels for his hoarded wealth, and the clinging desire that the worldly-minded foster for the things of the world—when the intensity of your heart's longing for the Lord is equal to the combination of these three, then shall you attain Him."

In country plays depicting the life of Krishna, the play commences with the beating of drums and the loud singing of 'O Krishna, come. Come, O dear!' But the person who plays the part of Krishna pays no heed to this noise and goes complacently chatting and smoking in the green-room. But as soon as this noise ceases, and the pious sage Narada enters the stage with sweet and soft music, and, with a heart overflowing with love, calls upon Krishna to appear, Krishna finds that he can no longer remain indifferent and hurriedly comes on the stage. So long as the aspirant calls on the Lord with mere lip-prayers of 'Come, O Lord', the Lord will not come. When the Lord does come, the heart of the devotee gets melted into divine emotion, and his loud utterances will all cease for ever. The Lord cannot delay in coming when His devotee calls Him from the depth of his heart over-flowing with profound love.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Disciple

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments, and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York for the English translation of the original from Bengali.]

It was the first day of the Durga Puja, the worship of the Divine Mother. Two young men arrived at Jayaramvati. The following day they gathered some lotuses and offered them at the feet of the Holy Mother. One of them said to her, "Mother, Please initiate me into Sannyasa." His companion joined him in the request. "My child," replied the Mother, "You will have everything. Why worry?" "But you must make me a Sannyasi," insisted the young man. "Please give me the ochre robe of a monk."

Mother (rather seriously): What will you do, my child, with the ochre robe? What is there in it? You are not married; you are a Sannyasi. You will get by and by, things that are needful for your spiritual life.

Devotee: Mother, it is my desire to throw away my clothes and sacred thread and be immersed constantly in the contemplation of God like Trilinga Swami.

Mother (with a smile): That's all right. You will have everything in time.

The devotee said, rather impatiently, "Let me, then, throw away my clothes and sacred thread." As he was about to give effect to his words,

the Holy Mother became worried and said to him, "Don't do it, please stop. These will drop off of themselves in proper time." Still the devotee continued with his demand and said, "Mother, give me a little bit of the Master's madness. Make me mad." Continuing he said, "Mother, you are denying me devotion to God. Won't you show me the Master?" "Oh, yes!" said the Mother, "you will have everything, my child." The young men saluted the Mother and went out.

While eating the midday meal the same devotee tasted the *Payesh*¹ and said, "Oh Mother, what kind of *Payesh* is it that you have cooked? It is not at all good." "What shall I do," said the Mother, "we do not get good milk here." Kedar's mother said, "Well, my child, you are all her children. Bring her articles of food in large quantities. She will feed you nicely." But the young man paid no heed to these words and said, "Mother, this time I have not eaten enough. Next time I must get enough food to fill my stomach. Please see me again at the Udbodhan." The Mother nodded her assent.

¹ Rice boiled in milk with sugar.

In the forenoon, a devotee had arrived from Shillong. Doubtful about the divine nature of the Mother he had taken a vow that he would not visit her unless he had seen her in a dream seven times. He had the requisite visions. Therefore he had come to Jayaramvati to pay her his respect. In the afternoon, as he was about to take leave of her, he said, "Mother, I shall say good-bye now. Do I need anything else?"

Mother: Yes, surely. You must get your initiation.

Devotee: I may have it at Bagh-Bazar in Calcutta.

Mother: But, my child, please finish that task. Have your initiation to-day.

Devotee: But I have eaten the Prasadam.

Mother: That will not do any harm.

After the initiation, the devotee took his departure.

The mental state of the eccentric devotee, referred to above, took a turn for the worse as he returned home from Jayaramvati. He became restless for the vision of the Master and felt piqued to think that the Holy Mother could by her mere will make him get a vision of Sri Ramakrishna and yet refused to do so. In a very angry state of mind he came back to Jayaramvati and said to her, "Mother, won't you enable me to see the Master?" The Mother said tenderly, "Yes, you will see Him; don't be so restless." He could not stand it any longer. He said in an angry voice, "You are only deceiving me. Here is the rosary you gave me. Take it back. I don't care for it any more." With these words he threw the rosary at her. "All right," said

the Mother, "Remain for ever the child of Sri Ramakrishna." He left the place at once.

One day, referring to this devotee, I asked the Holy Mother, "Did he also return the Mantram? He threw away his rosary. Can anyone ever return the Mantram?"

Mother: Can that ever be possible? The Word of the Mantram is living. Can anyone who has received it give it back? Can he, once having felt attraction for the Guru, get rid of him? This man, some day in the future, will come to himself again and fall at the feet of those whom he now abuses.

Devotee: Why does such a thing come to pass?

Mother: One sees such things. One Guru may initiate many disciples, but can they all be of the same nature? Spiritual life manifests in a devotee according to his nature. He once said to me, 'Mother, make me mad'. 'Why?' said I, 'Why should you be mad, my child? Can anyone without committing much sin, ever be mad?' He said, 'My younger brother has seen the Master, please let me also have vision of Him.' I said in reply, 'Who can ever see Him with the physical eyes? But one may do so by closing his eyes. Your brother is a child. He may have visualized the Master with his eyes closed; but he thinks that he has seen him with his eyes open.' 'Continue in your spiritual life,' I said, 'practise spiritual disciplines; pray to the Master, and you will also have the vision. Man knows in his own mind how far he has advanced and how much Knowledge and Consciousness of God he has obtained. He knows in his innermost soul how much of God he

has realized. Besides, who has been able to see God with his physical eyes ?'

This devotee, after being scolded at the Udbodhan office, used to live on the bank of the Ganges. Sometimes he would sit on the door-sill of the Udbodhan, and would take his meals there. After some time, one day he was brought to the Holy Mother with her permission. She tried to pacify him in various ways and said, "The Master used to say, 'I shall have to stand at the time of death, for those who pray to me.' These are the words of his own mouth. You are my child. What should you be afraid of? Why should you behave like a madman? That will disgrace the Master. People will say that this devotee has become mad. Should you conduct yourself in a way that will discredit the name of the Master? Go home; live as others do. Eat and live like them. At the time of your death, He will reveal Himself to you and take you to Him. Can you tell me if anyone

has ever got vision of Him with physical eyes? It was only Naren (Swami Vivekananda) who saw Him thus. That happened in America when he had intense yearning for Him. Naren then used to feel that the Master grasped his arm. That vision lasted only for a few days. Now, go home and live there happily. How miserable are the worldly people! The other day Rama's son passed away. You can at least sleep with an easy heart." Later on the Mother said to the other devotees, "The other day, while I was performing the worship I saw his face (referring to the above-mentioned devotee); his head had shaggy hair like Gopala. That very day he came here."

The devotee was much pacified by the consolation and words of instruction of the Holy Mother. He took his meals at the Udbodhan and later returned to his native village. He gradually regained his normal state of mind.

NATURALISM

By Prof. James Bissett Pratt, Ph.D.

[Professor Pratt is the well-known author of *Adventures in Philosophy and Religion*, *Personal Realism*, *The Religious Consciousness*, a *Psychological Study* and other works of first-rate importance. In the following pithy article he gives a wise warning not to scorn all Naturalism as a kind of destructive dogma. The distinction between a crude and a critical Naturalism is becoming vivid, and the latter, he suggests, like the highest and truest religion, has truth and truth alone as the goal of its quest, even though the method adopted for the purpose be empirical and purely rational.]

ONE of the most marked and most successful movements of our time is that which goes under the name of Naturalism. Few movements are so loved, so feared, or so hated. The variety of epithets show-

ered upon it is quite bewildering to the outsider whose aim is not to blame or praise but just to understand.

To understand the meaning of Naturalism it will be helpful first to consider some of the schools or ten-

dencies of thought to which it is opposed. One of these is indicated by the phrase "the Will to Believe." Whether one likes Naturalism or not, one must recognise that it honestly wants to know the truth. It does not wish to deceive anyone else and it is determined not to deceive itself. The truth may turn out to be unpleasant, but whatever it may be, Naturalism wants to know it. It is convinced that there is an actual state of things, that Reality is what it is, and our vision of it should not be clouded and colored by our desires.

Another antipathy of your honest "naturalist" is belief from authority. It matters not how sacred the tradition, how holy the Book, how old the Church, how great the writer's prestige, Naturalism would brush all this aside in coming to its conclusion about the Nature which we face, and consider only reason and empirical evidence.

The stress that Naturalism lays upon empirical evidence shows its incompatibility with Rationalism. Not that the two schools need necessarily quarrel, for they may deal with quite different subject-matters. Rationalism is interested chiefly in logic and the processes and outcome of pure *a priori* thought: Naturalism is interested in a physical, spatial, temporal human world. Rationalism investigates the realm of essence, Naturalism the realm of existence. There is, however, a type of Rationalism which claims to furnish an account of existence and Nature by *a priori* methods, scorning appeal to brute fact, and between this school and Naturalism there is war to the knife.

The contrast thus indicated between Naturalism and some of its op-

ponents will now enable us to reach a more definite view of its nature. It is characterized chiefly by three things: by its aim, by its method, and by its resulting system. All three are genuine parts of Naturalism. But the system it builds up is less important to it, less fundamental, less permanent than its method; and its method less permanent and essential than its aim. First of all it wants the truth about the world we live in, whatever that may turn out to be. In order to attain this it makes use of the empirical method. And by use of this method it builds up a picture of the universe. It is plain, therefore, that one cannot define Naturalism by any given picture, by any given theory or system, for its fidelity to its method and to its aim prevents it from being wholly and finally committed to any theory, and keeps it perpetually adding to, subtracting from, and modifying, whatever concept or system it may have built up. It is hardly conceivable that the time will ever come when it will reach an absolutely complete and final system, or cease changing, at least in detail, the best system it shall have constructed.

As thus understood Naturalism is far removed from the dogmatic position often attributed to it. Its aim is not propaganda of some favourite dogma but unbiassed investigation of the real world. Too often in religious and idealistic circles is Naturalism spoken of as a kind of evil conspiracy against all that is spiritual and ideal, a devil's invention with only malevolent aims. Unless we are to define Naturalism from the very start in such a way as to make it untenable, and in such a way as to be unjust to

the great majority of the honest empirical students of Nature, such a picture is pure caricature. Your genuine naturalistic investigator or philosopher has little or nothing in common with the bombastic atheist and materialist of an outgrown age. To the careless and inattentive he may, indeed, seem to resemble the thoughtless iconoclast, because he is brave enough to face and accept unpleasant and even appalling facts, provided they be facts. But the motive which prompts this is not love of destruction but love of truth.

If I have been right in my characterization of Naturalism, it will be necessary to distinguish within the school two sub-divisions. One of these—and I think by far the larger group—is made up of those who honestly put first of all the earnest desire to find out the truth, and who accordingly make unprejudiced use of the empirical method. The other group is characterised by incipient failure to be unscrupulously loyal to this high aim and method. They prize too highly some naturalistic “system” already reached; and consequently, without being aware of the fact, they

have in part gone over to one of the schools of thought which genuine Naturalism means always to attack, such as belief from authority or from the Will-to-Believe.

It is necessary, therefore, carefully to distinguish from each other a crude and a critical Naturalism. The crude Naturalism is not really empirical, is not really naturalistic, in the true sense, but is a form of prejudiced defence of some favourite philosophical theory such as Mechanism or Materialism. Your genuine Naturalism, on the other hand, keeps always an open mind, is willing to accept new facts, to weigh new philosophical proposals, and consequently to remodel and expand its conception of what Nature really is. It is plain that with a Naturalism of this sort, it will be quite possible for the idealist and the religiously-minded philosopher heartily and fruitfully to co-operate. And I believe that a careful scrutiny of the signs of the times will indicate that the lines of development which a critical Naturalism and a liberal Religion are taking in our day are steadily converging.

A LETTER OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

[The birth-day anniversary of Swami Shivananda, one of the greatest monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and a real Mahapurusha, falling this month, reminds us of his great saintly qualities. We are glad on this occasion to share with our readers the following autobiographic letter kindly placed at our disposal by an American devotee of the Swami, to whom he had written it, a couple of years before his passing away.]

Belur Math,

February 17, 1932.

MY DEAR A—

I am very glad to receive your letter of January 5, 1932. I have received the draft for Rupees Eight-

hundred enclosed therein and the money will be spent as you like it. I received the photographs in time. They were all very beautiful and we all like them very much

Yes, I am writing a short note regarding my personal life as I pro-

misled previously. I am keeping in different health; so I may not tell you everything as I desire to. However, I shall try to narrate the central theme of my life, past and present.

I was born in a middle class Brahmin family of Bengal in a village. My father was a lawyer and a devout worshipper of the Divine Mother. He used to earn much. But as he was most charitably-disposed, for which he was well-known in the locality, he would spend all his earnings month after month, without husbanding anything for the future, to help scores of poor neighbours with money, food and clothing. He believed in education; so more than thirty students lived in our house, my father bearing all their expenses *viz.*, school-fees, food and other incidental charges. So when my father died, the family became poor. My mother whom I lost at an early age was a very pious, hard-working and motherly lady. She alone would do all the works of the family, cooking, feeding, nursing and all. If any help were offered, she would reply: "Am I not the mother?" I feel myself even now fortunate that I got such parents.

From my early boyhood I had a deep longing to know God and to realise Him. That intensity grew with my age. Urged by it I would go to Brahmo Samaj and visit religious men who I thought would be able to throw light on the subject. I would also practise what they advised me. Family life had no charm for me even from my childhood. I had to give up my studies early on the death of my father due to straightened condition of the family. Myself being the only male child with two sisters, one of them still living, I had to come

to Calcutta to seek a job which I secured at a mercantile firm, Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co. But this made my heart very heavy and I would often weep in my prayers to God to free me for ever from all these ties. Here where I served for nearly two years I heard the name of Sri Ramakrishna and came in contact with him. The first interview took place in the house of the late Dr. Ram Chandra Dutt one of the most intimate devotees of the Master. Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna) had been invited to his house that evening. It was a nice gathering. The place had been surcharged with spirituality. I was struck to find that the conversation turned on Samadhi that evening, just the thing I wanted to know. I was perfectly satisfied with what I saw and heard there. A few days after this, I left for Dakshineswar Kali Temple, about 8 miles north of Calcutta. I reached the place when it was almost dark. Being new to the place, it took me a few minutes to find out his room. In the dim oil light I saw him seated cross-legged calmly on the wooden cot with three or four others sitting silently on the floor in front of him. As I approached, he asked me in a sweet voice who I was. I told him my name and the place of my birth. On this, he mentioned my father's name and asked me if I were his son. I replied in the affirmative. Then he watched me a little and asked me to come again, next morning. That was because I had told in the course of the talk that I would spend the night in the village itself with an acquaintance of mine. Later on, I learnt that he knew my father well, when he had to visit the temple to worship the Mother Kali

in connexion with his professional calls. When we parted he asked me to send a little ice for his use. This was done by Ram Babu and Suresh Babu.

This short audience was enough for me. I felt a deep attachment, and was drawn towards him. As if I knew him for a long time, my heart became full of joy. This was the more so because I saw in him my tender loving mother waiting for me. So with the confidence, faith and certitude of a child, I surrendered myself entirely to his care. I positively also became certain that at last I had found out him whom I was searching all these days. All my longings were satisfied and happiness reigned in its place.

Since then I looked upon him as my mother. By the bye, I may tell you that since the death of my mother I looked upon my father also as my dear mother. That sense deepened when I came in contact with my Master, Sri Ramakrishna. He also treated me the very same way. During my visits later, instead of bowing down I would place my head on his lap in the way of showing respects to him. With his heart full of affection he would hug it in his bosom, pat it, fondle me, caress me, just as a mother would do to her pet child. It was an Elysian favour. He once asked me: 'What do you take me to be?' I replied, 'You are my mother Divine.' A sweet celestial loving smile played on His lips and our relations were re-established through a new testament.

After this momentous visit my life with the family and hours in the office seemed to be a heavy load on me. I would run to him at all possible opportunities to meet him either at

Dakshineswar or at Calcutta where he would at times come to visit the devotees and pious men of all religions and thoughts.

During my second or third visit to Dakshineswar when I was serving him, in an ecstatic mood he suddenly touched my chest with the palm of his soft legs. This magic touch took away all my consciousness. In that state I don't know how long I remained. On getting back my consciousness I saw him rubbing the palm of his hand on my head, most probably to bring me back to consciousness. I have seen him behave like that later in other cases. At that time he will pray, 'Mother, come down! come down!' The result of the touch was that I realised that everything became revealed to me, that I was the Eternal Soul, free, and that Sri Ramakrishna was that Eternal Principle, the Isvara Who had come down in mercy in human form for the good of mankind and also that I was on earth to serve Him. This kindness he once again showered on me at Dakshineswar under the Banyan tree in Panchavati.

Notwithstanding this, he would not allow us to rest on our laurels but would constantly urge us with patience infinite, to taste by our own efforts the fruits of his own realisation. He watched our efforts and directed us with meticulous care to proceed on our own lines through paths suited to our own attitudes. Sincerity only counted with him. Bigotry, orthodoxy, had no place in his teaching and in his life. He would accept all, of all denominations, with equal tolerance, love and sympathy. He spurred us all to reach the ultimate Goal through our own paths. To come

in contact with him was to become spiritual for ever. To live with him was to live in the presence of God.

I had to marry later on—against my conviction. This I had to do to get one of my sisters married with one of the members of the family from which my wife came. I had to agree to it on account of our poor pecuniary condition. This, at first, disheartened me very much. I felt as if a link of Maya's chain had been forged for my bondage. So with a disconsolate mind, soon after the ceremony, I ran up to him and prayed to give me permission to forsake the world before I got enmeshed in it. But he replied with all sympathy, "No, my boy, not now. Do not get dispirited; this marriage will enhance your Vairagyam (absence of worldly desires) and make you more fit for the spiritual life." Actually, it happened to be so. My wife with whom I never slept for a night in the same bed and whom I always treated kindly died within a year. That year was to me a year of intense preparation. My determination to renounce the world deepened as I would pray, often a whole night with tears in my eyes, to free me and not to bind me down with the chains of the world. So at the death of my wife, relieved of all bondages, I ran up straight to him at Dakshineswar and prayed to allow me to stay with him. He kindly accepted me. Since then for the next three years he was with us in the body. I lived almost continuously with him.....

At Dakshineswar I met Premananda, Brahmananda and Swamiji.¹ They came there before me. Swamiji

¹Swami Vivekananda.

amongst us was loved and trusted most by him. He left with him the command to organise and bring this Order up. About it I need not dilate. You know all from the books published.

After his passing away, I travelled much throughout the length and breadth of India and endeavoured much to know Him in His different aspects. I liked the Himalayas very much and also passed a considerable period in South India and Ceylon. Benares I loved much as that is the Eternal city, the abode of Siva. All my endeavours have ended in realising Him everywhere. Sri Ramakrishna is the centre from where all the radii have travelled towards the circumference. So I write to you that I have not 'realised', but seen, God—not in astral form but in this gross human form. And I declare it to you that Sri Ramakrishna is the fuller and more developed manifestation of Him, for the present, the highest possible manifestation of Him in human form. Follow him in your own way, you will surely reach through his grace to ultimate peace and blessedness. You are fortunate that you have come within his orbit so early. As such I am sure you will not have to be born again.

I am doing tolerably well, though my blood pressure is still very high. That doesn't matter. I depend entirely on Him. I sent you one letter in the first week of this month. I hope you have received it. May this find you well and happy. My blessings and best wishes to you.....

Affectionately ever yours,
Shivananda.

OPPOSITE APPROACHES TO ABSOLUTISM

By Dr. P. T. Raju, Ph.D., Sastri

[The term Absolute has slightly varying shades of meaning in different systems of thought. However, daring thinkers of the East and the West who have pushed their philosophic reasoning to the farthest limit have arrived at one form or other of this doctrine. As the fundamental principle of all reality, the Absolute has been considered by Sankara 'a secure fortress impregnable to logicians' (Com. on Br. Up. II, 1-20). The various subjectivistic schools of the past and the scientific materialism of to-day arrive at an Absolutistic conception from the two opposite poles of experience. A very brief and critical survey of the two tendencies indicated by the history of philosophy forms the theme of Dr. Raju's essay. Dr. Raju, besides being a lecturer in Philosophy, is also the author of a thoughtful volume on Hegelianism and Advaita entitled *Thought and Reality* (Allen Unwin Ltd., 1937).]

THE history of philosophy presents a vast spectacle of diverse stand-points of human thought in its endeavour to understand man and his universe. From every stand-point the attempt is made to offer a consistent interpretation of our experience of the world. Almost all these stand-points can be classed into pairs of opposites, so that each system of philosophy can be found to have a rival contending for recognition. Sometimes the approach to understand the world is made from the side of the epistemological subject, and all systems of philosophy which make the subject their starting-point are styled subjectivisms. The opposite approach is from the side of the object, and treats the subject as one of the many things of the world, if not as a mere effervescence, and we get the various forms of materialism. In this connection the opposition between realism and idealism seems of late to have lost its significance. For idealism does not deny the claims of realism, but points to the necessity of going beyond what we experience immediately. But the opposition may take a different form

namely, the opposition between idealism and what we may call actualism. The former attempts to interpret the world in terms of the ideal or norm, what is in terms of what *ought to be*; the latter tries to observe just what is and describe it just as it is. These are two of the most important rival approaches to the interpretation of our experience. But each of them, when taken by itself, has been found wanting. It could not cover the whole of our experience, it can satisfactorily explain only a part. It succeeded where its rival failed; but in its turn it failed where its rival succeeded. This paper attempts to show that it is only in some form of Absolutism that the one-sidedness of these stand-points can be removed, and the claims of all can be met. The world is so complex, it contains so many things irreducible to one another, that from the side of any single stand-point, an adequate explanation of the world cannot be offered. There are certainly many more stand-points than here considered. But it requires the writing of a book to deal with all of them. We shall therefore limit our discussion

to the two referred to. Even then we can touch only the essentials and cannot enter into details. Taking each into consideration we shall endeavour to show that it is able to cover the whole of our experience when it transcends itself and comprehends its rival ; so that the peculiarity of the starting-point is lost in the end. Absolutism results in that in which every one-sided system finds completion and is transcended. This transcending does not imply that the particular claims, to defend which the starting-point has been formulated, are not real claims ; it only implies that these claims as well as the counter claims can be satisfied only by rising higher. The opposition between these can be removed only by rising to a position where the opposition is not felt.

I

It is often said that thought originates in conflict or contradiction. If the course of life were to run smooth without impediments and obstacles, thought perhaps would not have evolved. Professor Whitehead tells us that thought begins with negation.¹ The pragmatists tell us that it begins with a problem.² In the history of human thought there is continuous appearance of new problems ; and sometimes the re-appearance of the same in a new garb. Every now and then a new conflict is discovered in our experience. Philosophers take sides, construct opposing systems of thought, find themselves exhausted after a particular length,

and reach a position in which their stand-point loses its significance.

It is thus that subjectivism originated. With Descartes began the opposition, in European philosophy, between the subject and the object. He conceived them as different and disparate entities, the one as pure thought without extension, and the other as pure extension. And the problem as to how the subject could know the object which is so different from it, became acute. For, the subject, in order to know the object, had to come into contact with it, but it was inconceivable how two absolutely different entities which had nothing at all in common could come into contact with each other. In Berkeley's philosophy this difficulty seems to have been overcome. For he denied the independent reality of the object from the subject, and said that the former is only an idea of the latter. The subject can know only its ideas. So far he appears to be a thorough-going subjectivist. But yet he could not stop with subjectivism. There are other aspects of our experience which he could not deny and had to explain. If the object is the idea of the subject, how is it that no sane man believes that he can create objects out of his mind, though he believes that he can create ideas out of it? Berkeley, then, had to draw a distinction between ideas of imagination and ideas which are objective. The latter cannot be produced at our will and pleasure, they occur in an order. But then how can they be called ideas? They are not the ideas of any human being: otherwise, they would be private to him. If they are not ideas, they must be objects existing independently of every human

¹ *Process and Reality*, p. 225, "Consciousness is the feeling of negation".

² Dewey : *How we think*, p. 12.

mind. But then Berkeley was loth to give up his subjectivism. But subjectivism, in the sense that the world is an idea of any finite subject did not adequately explain the situation. He had therefore to sublimate that form of subjectivism by identifying the subject of the ideas which are objects with God. The objects of the world are God's ideas, not the ideas of merely the finite minds. Berkeley felt that the objects must somehow be the ideas of a mind; otherwise, the mind cannot know them. And if they are not the ideas of a finite mind, they must be the ideas of an infinite mind, which is God.³ And because we partake of the nature of God, we are able to know His ideas, that is, the objects of the world. But how we partake of the nature of God, and how we know the objects through Him, remain ultimate doubts or problems in Berkeley's philosophy. Call the objects the ideas of God, they still are not *our* ideas. And the original problem, how we can know objects which are different from minds, is only pushed back, not solved. The objects finally remain objects, lose nothing of their objectivity, for they are not this or that mind's ideas. For this reason Berkeley's idealism is called objective idealism. This line of thought influenced a large number of British idealists like Ferrier.⁴ This objective idealism, we can easily see, is subjective idealism sublimated, that is, subjective idealism transcends itself. Thus though Berkeley was obliged to give up the independent existence of objects at

the beginning in order to solve the epistemological problem, in the end he found the problem raising its head again. But meanwhile he reached a conception akin to that of the 'Absolute in later idealism, in which the disparity between the natures of the idea and the object disappeared. For the objects are the ideas of God, and so far share the nature of the subject though the subject is the infinite subject. But the stigma that attached to ordinary subjectivism cannot be attached to the subjectivism of God ; for so far as the objects are treated as being independent of the finite mind, it is only a question of terminology, from the standpoint of the finite mind, whether we should call them the objects of the finite mind or the ideas of God. If deeper consideration reveals to us that ideas and objects have some common nature, we so far gained an advance in philosophic thought.

II

But this advance it does not seem that we can with justification attribute to Berkeley. The credit ought rather to go to Kant. Berkeley started with pure subjectivism, and within subjectivism itself he wanted to preserve the objectivity of the objects. That ideas and objects have a common nature is not the result of his philosophy, but is asserted at the very beginning by denying the existence of objects outside the knowing minds. But Kant started with the opposition between the subject and the object as handed down to him and as commonly experienced in ordinary consciousness, and pointed out that no experience is possible in which the subject does not contribute something

³ Johnston : *The Development of Berkeley's Philosophy*, pp. 184-5.

⁴ Cunningham : *The Idealist Argument*, p. 36.

out of itself to the object. This contribution, Kant says, consists of the Categories of the Understanding like Substance, Casuality, etc. He further postulates three Ideas of Reason, *viz.*, the Self, the World as a Whole and God, the sum-total of all existence, as regulative ideas, that is, as norms according to which we should organise our experience. Thus these enter into the understanding of our experience, though not into the constitution of our experience. And these three Ideas are not left in isolation by Kant. For he writes: "Finally, it is obvious, that there exists among transcendental ideas a certain connection and unity, and that pure reason, by means of them, collects all its cognitions into one system. From the cognition of the self to the cognition of the world, and through these to the supreme being, the progression is so natural, that it seems to resemble the logical march of reason from the premises to the conclusion."⁵ Though Kant started with the subject and object as opposed, he is obliged to postulate an Ideal of Reason which comprehends both and in which their opposition is lost. Thus the result at which Kant arrived seemed to be little different from that at which Berkeley arrived. Berkeley postulated God and His ideas which are our objects in order to give an adequate account of our cognition. Yet this God is not directly perceived by us like the trees and the mountains. God, therefore, is a transcendental ideal just as much in Berkeley as in Kant. In Him the opposition between the subject and the object loses its significance. We may call Him the

Object, the sole reality that exists, or the Subject whose ideas constitute the world. But in any way the subject or object in the ordinary sense in which the aspect of opposition is essential, is sublimated, so that it is indifferent whether we call it subject or object. Yet it is continuous with both and includes both. When the continuity with the self is emphasized it is called Self-consciousness. Otherwise, it may be called the Absolute, as it is called by the post-Kantian idealists.

III

Almost the same result is reached by many physicists and other scientists. They naturally start with the object, and interpret the world in terms of the object. And to understand the object they analyse the objects into the simplest constituents possible, and in this attempt most of them have come to the view that the ultimate constituents of the world are spiritual. Thus Eddington says in his *New Pathways of Science*, "As for the external objects, remorselessly dissected by science, they are studied and measured, but they are never known. Our pursuit of them has led from solid matter to molecules, from molecules to sparsely scattered electric charges, from electric charges to waves of probability."⁶ And he maintains that the nature of the world is spiritual.⁷ James Jeans says in his *New Background of Science* that the world and mind are of the same nature. He quotes appreciatively from Russell; "The world presented for our belief by a philosophy based on modern science is in many ways less alien to ourselves than the world

⁵ Meiklejohn: *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 224.

⁶ pp. 322-3.

⁷ p. 319.

of matter conceived in the former centuries."⁸ And in his *Mysterious Universe* he accepts Berkeley's eternal Being in whose mind the objects exist as ideas.⁹ Similarly Whitehead, who approached philosophy from the side of mathematics and the theory of relativity, appreciatively quotes a passage from Schelling: "In the 'Philosophy of Nature' I considered the subject-object called nature in its activity as self-constructing. In order to understand it, we must rise to an intellectual intuition of nature. The empiricist does not rise thereto, and for this reason in all his explanations it is always *he himself* that proves to be constructing the nature. It is no wonder, then, that his construction and that which was constructed coincide. A *Nature-philosophy* raises nature to independence, and makes it construct itself, and he never feels, therefore, the necessity of opposing nature as constructed (*i.e.* as experience) to real nature, or of correcting the one by means of the other."¹⁰ Both for Bradley and Whitehead the primary activity at the basis of experience is feeling.¹¹ This tendency in scientific thought shows that it is not opposed to the spiritualistic conception of the universe. There is the general tendency to remove the opposition between mind and nature and treat both as the manifestations of a unitary principle. And this principle which is to comprehend both can be nothing but the Absolute. Whitehead's organic conception of the world is not far removed from absolutism.

IV

In Indian philosophy we find the same result. There are systems in India as in the West, which refuses to carry their speculations beyond a certain limit. They naturally did not reach the conception of the Absolute. But those systems which did not shrink from pushing their reasonings to their logical extremes certainly reached the conception of the Absolute. The most outstanding and important of these are the Advaita which is a Vedantic system, and the Vijñānavāda and Sunyavāda which are Buddhistic.

Advaita did not originate with the same epistemological problem as that with which the Berkelian and the Kantian philosophies started. Hence the difficulty to label Advaita either as subjectivism or as realism. Its attitude in this respect is not as easily apparent as that of Berkeley or Kant. Some called it subjectivism, some realism, and others pseudo-realism. Advaita started as an interpretation of the Upanishads, and the Brahmasūtras, and we may include, the Bhagavadgita. Its epistemology, religion, metaphysics, etc., are promiscuously mixed up. Sankara, the protagonist of Advaita, did not write separate treatises on these subjects. Later Advaitin writers made attempts to write separate treatises on some of these topics. They had to separate these discussions, and we get from them some definitely formulated theories. Yet all are not unanimous except as regards the non-dualistic nature of the Absolute. Some like Prakāśananda appear to be pure subjectivists, because they start with Sankara's theory that the self and

⁸ p. 290.

⁹ p. 126.

¹⁰ *The Concept of Nature*, p. 47.

¹¹ *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 296.

the Absolute are identical. Even then it is not the problem, 'How can the subject know the object which is different from it' that led them to the postulation of the Absolute. What led them to its postulation is the criterion of truth. Truth is what is *traikalikabadhya*, that is, what is uncontradicted in the past, present, and the future, and such a truth can be the Absolute only. But where can it be found? Only in the knower. Otherwise, as it cannot be found outside him, how could he have come to apply it as a standard of truth? If the Absolute shines through our self, can it shine as its object? Certainly not. For then it would be as imperfect as any other object. Then it must shine as somehow identical with our self. It is the light by virtue of which everything is known, and to know which no other light is necessary. But then can it be different from the knower? No. Somehow therefore the finite self and the Absolute must be identical. That is, they are the same in essence.

Such is the gist of the progress of the argument of Advaita, if we ignore the frequent references to scriptures. But now can this self, which is the Absolute, be opposed to an object which is a not-self? Can there be a second to this self? If the object is independent of the Absolute, then the latter cannot be a standard for the object's truth or falsity. Every thing must depend upon the Absolute, owe its existence to the Absolute. Then only can the Absolute be the ultimate truth in the light of which every thing is known and judged. If so, the distinction between the subject and the object should be meaningless in the Absolute. Some who are mere stu-

dents of the Sanskrit works on Advaita may wonder whether this is its line of argument. In this article we cannot attempt, for want of space, to demonstrate that it is so. But we can say that, if it is not so, Advaita, as a system of philosophy, can have no rational foundation. And those who do not believe in the infallibility of the scriptures may, without hesitation, put it aside.

V

Most Buddhists protest against regarding Buddhistic idealism as subjectivism. The *alayavijnana* or the 'storehouse of consciousness' of the Yogachara school is not the same as the epistemological subject. Only in essence are the two identical, as the Jiva and the Brahman are identical in Advaita. "This," says Sir Charles Eliot, "so far as it is super-individual, is an aspect of suchness,"¹² but when it affirms and particularises itself, it becomes *Citta*, that is the human mind."¹³ Hence in many respects *alayavijnana* occupies the same position in the Vijnanavada as that which the Brahman occupies in Advaita. It is interesting to note that the universal Dharmakaya of the Tathagatas occupies a similar position. "It transforms and unfolds itself, whenever conditions are favourable, in the form of a Tathagata or some other form, in order that all beings may be induced to bring their store of merit to maturity."¹⁴ According to the Madhyamika school, "God is all and all is God."¹⁵ More-

¹² *Tathata* which corresponds to the Absolute.

¹³ *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. 2, p. 48.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁵ Yamakami Sogen : *Systems of Buddhist Thought*, p. 205.

ever, their *sunya* is not void but is perfect reality. When it is said that everything is *sunya*, the statement means that nothing in this world has a nature of its own. It means simply that the world is *nissvabhava*.¹⁶ In fact, one of the *Madhyamika karikas* says that reality is neither *sunya* nor *a-sunya*, neither both nor neither. This *sunya* is again not different from the world.¹⁷ Generally speaking all these statements lead us to the conclusion that all schools of Buddhist idealism are trying to express the truth that in the ultimate reality the distinction between the opposites like existence and non-existence, subject and object, etc., has no place, and that ultimate reality transcends all and is not a many. In a paper like this we cannot go into a detailed discussion of these schools. Even among Buddhists there are realists like the Sarvastivavadins. "But," says Sir Charles Eliot, "many eminent Buddhists began by being Sarvastivavadins and became Mahayanists, their earlier belief being regarded as preliminary rather than erroneous."¹⁸ The philosopher who boldly follows the lead of his logic cannot but end in some form of monism, and in the result reached, the opposites that hold true at the starting point, lose their meaning and significance.

VI

We have thus seen that, whether the philosopher starts from the object or the subject or from both, he is led by his logic to Absolutism, if his position is to be comprehensive and consistent. In discussing this topic we

included Sankara's idealism, though he does not start with the opposition between the subject and the object. He indeed starts with their dualism, though not with their opposition, reaches the conception of the Absolute as the ideal truth, points out that it shines through the subject, and concludes that the Absolute is the sole reality, and the subject and the object and everything in the universe owe their existence to it. Sankara reached the Absolute, not in order to reconcile the rival claims of the subject and the object, but as the ideal truth. But when once the Absolute is postulated, Sankara too is obliged to transcend the distinction between the subject and the object. And to show that this distinction has no significance even for his Absolute we have included him in one of the above sections.

Yet his position leads us to the other opposition, *viz.*, between the actual and the ideal. The opposition between the two has been strongly emphasized by many systems of philosophy and especially by ethics. Kant, in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, made a complete separation between what is and what ought to be. Hegel in his *Logic*¹⁹ criticised this separation; for the 'Ought' is not something set over against the 'Is', so that we have both side by side; but the 'Ought' includes the 'Is', is the latter's completion. In truth even in Kant this is so. For the three Ideas of Reason are for Kant necessary for the organisation and understanding of our experience, and what is essential for the understanding of our experience must be implied by it. What is thus implied cannot therefore be

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 14.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 23.

¹⁸ *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. 8, p. 92.

¹⁹ Wallace: *The Logic of Hegel*, pp. 11-12.

opposed to it. Though Kant regards these Ideas as merely regulative in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he finds that this reason has to be constitutive, in his *Critique of Practical Reason*.²⁰ Yet he compares the Ideas of Reason to Plato's ideas which are archetypes of things, i.e., ideals.²¹ So, that Reason with its ideas which are to constitute our experience in its practical aspect is already implied in the understanding of our experience as a unifying principle. And if our experience cannot be understood without that principle, then that must also constitute it; so that the ideal is already actual as presupposed by our experience. This point has not been noticed by Kant, and he left the 'Ought' and the 'Is' as opposed. This opposition runs throughout his second *Critique*, and gave occasion for the criticism of the later idealists. But as a matter of fact, the actual and the ideal are not opposed; the latter is implied in the former, and we can understand the actual only in terms of the ideal. Apart from Kant's teaching that the ideal should be the regulative principle of our understanding, even in ordinary perception it is the ideal that enables us to understand the actual. This fact was noticed even by Plato. No actual triangle can be a true triangle; for a triangle is a plane figure bounded by three straight lines, and it is impossible to obtain a figure which completely answers to this definition. Besides the old criticism that there is no physical line without breadth and thickness, and no physical line

which is exactly straight, it is now held that space is spherical, and so there can be no plane figure. Hence the true triangle must be an ideal figure, and only in terms of such a figure can any triangle drawn be understood. Similarly, if I make the judgment 'that is a man', I am using a norm here. Even a hideous monster without many organs is called a man, but this is only by courtesy. For what differentiates man from not-man? Hegel is not without justification when he refused to call an imperfect man, man. Any particular is understood in terms of a universal. Apart from the question of its eternity, this universal must be a norm, and not an abstraction from many particulars. Otherwise, if we take all men from the most perfect to the worst monsters, the common characteristic obtained by abstraction can never enable us to understand man. If the universal is therefore a norm or ideal, and every particular is understood through a universal, then it is understood through a norm. Thus a norm or ideal is implied or involved in every bit of our experience. So the ideal and actual can never be separated: there is no inherent opposition between the two.

Even in Sankara's idealism the Absolute is postulated as what is implied or involved in our finite experience. Our experience is relative and imperfect: it is vitiated by contradictions. But what is relative and imperfect and vitiated by contradictions must be based upon, and presupposes, what is absolute, perfect and uncontradicted. Thus though the Absolute is the ideal truth, it is implied by the actual, and so cannot be opposed to the actual. It is because

²⁰ Abbot: *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, pp. 144, seq.

²¹ Melklejohn: *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 221, seq.

the Absolute too has to be treated as real and true that most of the absolutists have been led to regard the world as relatively unreal. Whether we call the world unreal or coin some other word to denote its status with regard to the Absolute, it is a question of terminology. The peculiar point we have arrived at is that the Absolute, though an ideal, is implied by the actual and is at the core of actuality. The Absolute, though at first is seen to be opposed to the actual, is for deeper consideration at the very heart of the opposite. Hence in Absolutism the opposition between idealism and actualism vanishes. Philosophy may start with the actual, and postulate the ideal; but the ideal it later finds to be the truth of the actu-

al. This reconciliation is possible only in Absolutism. For unless our philosophy is comprehensive enough, and pushes its reasonings to their logical extreme, the ideal cannot be found within the actual itself. And such a philosophy can be nothing but Absolutism. As we have shown, there can be no pure actualism; for no actual can be understood unless with reference to the ideal, and any attempt to separate the ideal from the actual must therefore end in failure. But when once the presence of the ideal in the actual is admitted, the question cannot be avoided, 'What is the highest ideal?' Naturally one will be led to the Absolute, as Kant has been led to the Ideal of Reason. And this is the same as the Absolute.

THE PLACE OF PRARABDHA KARMA IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHIES

By Dr. R. Shama Sastri, Ph. D.

[Dr. Shama Sastri of Artha Sastra fame throws some new light on the conception of Prarabdha Karma, as conceived by Advaitic thinkers. Not past actions alone but knowledge also forms a factor in embodiment; Prarabdha which is confined to the sum total of happiness and misery can be combated—these form the thesis of this article.]

ALMOST all the schools of Indian philosophers are unanimous in ascribing rebirth to past Karma or the sum of actions done in the previous birth. It is called Prarabdha which in its literal sense means that Karma which has begun to operate by bringing a body into existence so as to be a medium for the experience of happiness and misery, as a result of past actions. It is usually defined to be a sum of past actions, which may be either good or bad or a mixture of both and which is

productive of a physical body suitable for the experience of happiness or misery resulting from those past actions. This definition implies that Prarabdha is solely responsible for the success or failure of man in this life and that no attempt on his part can possibly end or mend the effects of his Prarabdha-karma. If this is the meaning of Prarabdha and if there is no limitation to the effects of Prarabdha, it follows that there is no difference between Prarabdha and Fatalism. This

form of fatalistic interpretation has been given to Prarabdha-karma in most of the Puranas of the Brahmins and the Jataka stories of the Buddhists and the Jainas. Even with the common people among the Hindus, the Buddhists, and the Jainas, Prarabdha-karma is a ready word spontaneously uttered by way of offering an explanation of the sudden rise or fall, not only of an individual, but also of a nation. The following oft-quoted verse illustrates the above view:—

“Neither can Vishnu or Siva nor even Brahma obliterate or wipe out the writing on the forehead of man.”¹

The writing on the forehead of man is another name given to Prarabdha-karma.

Taking advantage of the myth that Siva bears on his neck or head a necklace of skulls, a Sanskrit poet sings as follows:—

“Those skulls which were once shining on the neck of Siva are now rolling on the surface of the earth, being turned round and round by vultures with their claws. This is the singular effect of the all-powerful Prarabdha seen in the vicissitudes of men.”²

But this fatalistic interpretation of Prarabdha-karma is unknown to the

Upanishads and the Vedanta philosophers, particularly the Advaitins. Following the teachings of the Upanishads, the Brihadaranyaka in particular, the Advaitins speak of a threefold cause of man's birth and the vicissitudes in his life. The threefold cause consists of (1) knowledge acquired, (2) the sum of actions, good or bad or a mixture of both, done in the previous birth, and (3) the impressions of past knowledge and actions stored in the sub-conscious mind (Vasana). Of these, knowledge, right or wrong or a mixture of both, acquired in the previous birth, is said to be the cause of a suitable physical body brought about as a medium for experiencing the results of past Karma. Prarabdha or past Karma is said to be the chief cause of only happiness or misery. The impressions of these two is stated to be stored in the subconscious so as to revive them and bring about their results in time. This is clearly stated in Suresvara's Vartikasara on the Brihadaranyaka.

“Knowledge acquired and actions done by him in the previous birth and the impressions of those two—all these three are together the cause of his birth and of his experience of happiness or misery. Knowledge determines a suitable body pointing out, as it were, that “such ought to be the body.” Karma is the cause of a change in the experience of happiness or misery. The bearer of these two to the next birth is the impressions of those two. She (the collection of impressions) is more powerful than those two. For she is able to carry

¹ हरिणापि हरेणापि ब्रह्मणापि कथं च न ।
ललाटलिखिता रेखा परिमार्ष्टुं न शक्यते ॥

² शिवशिरसि शिरसि यानि रेजुः
शिव शिव तानि लुठन्ति पृथग्पदैः ।
अथ खड्ग । विषमः पुराकृतानां
भवति हि जन्तुषु कर्मणां विपाकः ॥

them forward. Hence she is separately counted.”³

The Vartikasara sums up as follows:—

“Impressions, actions, and knowledge,—these three are the causes of rebirth. Importance to Karma among them is what is stated in the Sruti (that is, the Upanishad). The best or the worst form of the physical body depends upon the nature of Karma. Capacity for enjoyment is brought about by knowledge and impressions of knowledge and actions. Hence whoever desires good should undertake only good work, and reject condemnable work with a view to avoid misery. Thus those who attach importance to sacrificial acts taught in the Vedas proper, (that is, the Purvakanda) have given importance to Karma or action. But those who are experts in the Vedanta-sastra give, on the other hand, importance to Kama, desire, instead of to Karma. For unless desire for the results of a work is the ruling passion in the breast of man, he will not undertake that work. Because desire is the cause of action, desire is therefore the important factor. For none is seen to undertake a work, unless he has a desire for the result of that action. Whatever a man

does is at the prompting of his desire.”⁴

From this passage it is clear that the ritualists following the teachings of the Vedas proper, attach importance to Karma or action, while the Vedantists following the Upanishads, give importance to desire (Vasana) in the matter of bringing about rebirth. In the passage quoted above Karma does not mean merely the Vedic rites. It also means other kinds of work, prescribed or not prescribed in the Vedas. For they state that the cause of rebirth is on the whole of ninety-six kinds: Knowledge is of twelve kinds, Karma is of twenty-four kinds, and Vasana or impression is of sixty kinds. The twelve forms of knowledge are (1) that which is prescribed; (2) that which is forbidden; (3) that which is similar to what is prescribed or enjoined; (4) that which is similar to what is forbidden; (5-12) each of these four may be of three kinds in that it may be right, wrong, or doubtful. Thus knowledge acquired is of twelve kinds.

The twenty-four forms of Karma are (1) that which is enjoined; (2) that which is forbidden; (3) that which is not enjoined; (4) that which

³ जन्मान्तरारम्भहेतुः किं स्यादिति तदुच्यते ।

विद्या संपादिता तेन पुरा कर्म च यत् कृतम् ॥

या वासना च तत् सर्वं जन्मभोग्यादिकारणम् ।

देहं विद्या परिब्रिह्याद् ईदृशो देह इत्ययम् ॥

विकृतं कर्म बोह तु पूर्वप्रज्ञेह पूर्वयोः ।

समर्था सैव ते यस्मादुद्बोद्धुं जन्मकर्मणी ।

नरस्याय प्रधानत्वाद् ताभ्यां वा पृथक् पृथक् ॥

⁴ वासना कर्म विद्या च त्रयं जन्मप्रयोजकम् ।

उक्तं तत्र प्रधानत्वं कर्मणः श्रूयते पुनः ॥

उत्तमाधमदेहाख्यवैषम्यं कर्मणा भवेत् ।

देहे विद्यावासनाभ्यां भवेद् भोग्येषु कौशलम् ॥

कर्म साध्वेव कर्तव्यं इच्छताभ्युदयं परम् ।

पापं तु सर्वथा हेयं दुःखेभ्यस्त्रायता भृशम् ॥

पूर्वकाण्डपरा इत्यं कर्मप्राधान्यमूचिरे ।

अथ वेदान्तशास्त्रज्ञाः प्राहुः कामप्रधानताम् ॥

पुमानादौ काममय एव भूत्वा तु कर्मकृत् ।

यतोऽयं कर्मणा हेतुः कामोऽतोऽस्य प्रधानता ॥

अकामस्य क्रिया काश्चिद् दृश्यते नेह कस्य चिद् ।

यद्यद्वि क्रूरते जन्तुः तत् तत् कामस्य चेष्टितम् ॥

is not forbidden; each of these four is of three kinds in that it may be mental, physical or verbal; thus Karma is of twelve kinds. As each of these may be productive of results seen or unseen, Karma on the whole becomes of twenty-four kinds.

Likewise the impressions of knowledge are of twelve kinds, as knowledge itself is shown to be of twelve kinds. Similarly the impressions of Karma are of twenty-four kinds, as Karma itself is shown to be of twenty-four kinds; likewise the impressions of the results of Karma enjoyed are of twenty-four kinds; thus the impressions of Karma and of its results are on the whole of forty-eight kinds.

Thus the impressions of knowledge and Karma put together come to ninety-six.

It follows therefore that in the view of the ancient Hindu philosophers man is bound to enjoy or suffer from the knowledge he had acquired in his previous birth, whether it is right or wrong or of doubtful nature, and that he is similarly bound to enjoy or suffer from the work done by him in his previous birth, whether the work done by him was enjoined or forbidden or whether it was productive of results seen or unseen.

Thus the impressions of past knowledge and of past actions stored in the subconscious are stated to hold the man responsible for their results. But in holding man responsible for his past knowledge and past actions his

present knowledge and his present actions are also taken into consideration. In the fifth chapter of the *Yogavasishtha*⁵ present good knowledge and good actions are said to counteract the results of past knowledge and past actions, just as the bad effects of yesterday's bad work are counteracted by to-day's good work.

In the eighth chapter the same idea is more clearly stated, as follows:—

"The store of impressions is of two kinds: good or bad. The store of impressions of the previous birth is one or the other of these two kinds. If you are carried on by the store of good impressions, you will gradually attain the happy end. If the store of bad impressions involves you in a calamity, then attempt should be made by you to overcome it by force. The store of good and bad impressions usually flows by straight and narrow courses. Accordingly attempt should be made to direct it in a good and agreeable channel."⁶

In conclusion it may be stated that the charge of fatalistic view levelled against the Hindu on account of the misinterpretation of the theory of Prarabdha-karma by the uninformed among them has no foundation and that the theory of Prarabdha-karma, as explained above, is sure to render them more ethical and progressive than any other scientific theory of man's responsibility for his actions.

⁵ दोषाः शाम्यन्त्यसन्देहं प्राक्तनोऽद्यतनैर्गुणैः ।

दृष्टान्तोऽस्य अस्तनस्य दोषस्याद्यतनैर्गुणैः ॥

अस्तनो दुष्ट आचार आचारेणाद्य साधुना ।

यथाशु शुभतां याति प्राक्तनं कुरुतं तथा ॥

⁶ द्विषिषो वासनाभ्यूहो शुभवैवाशुभश्च सः ।

प्राक्तनो वासनाभ्यूहो द्वयोरैकतरोऽयं वा ॥

वासनौघेन शुभेन तत्रचेदपनीयसे ।

तत् क्रमेण शुभेनैव पदं प्राप्नोषि शाश्वतम् ॥

अथो चेदशुभो भावः त्वां योजयति सांक्रुते ।

प्राक्तनस्तद् आशु यत्नाज् जेतव्यो भवता बलात् ॥

शुभाशुभाभ्यां मार्गाभ्यां वहन्ती वासनासरित् ।

पौरुषेण प्रयत्नेन योजनीया शुभे पथि ॥

GOD AND PRAYER IN HINDUISM

By Dr. V. Raghavan, M.A., Ph.D.

[Dr. Raghavan is a scholar of the Madras University and has made some noteworthy contributions to Sanskrit research. In the present article he refutes effectively, with an array of cogent facts, a few of the common criticisms levelled against Hindu theism by some Western writers.]

WHO does not pray? Some indeed are blessed that they are endowed with a permanent faith in God; live, move and have their being in Him; and success or failure, pray to Him. With these, prayer is a necessity of life like love. The majority generally forget God in the exhilaration of success, self-won as they imagine it to be; but the first blast of adversity lays them low at the feet of God. Adversity is a *yoga* (means) which brings man nearer to God. Death is a great prosoletyzer. When senses are virile and body iron, man dissipates himself without a thought, but when he finds his body a wreck, he begins to reflect; slowly faith pervades his being like an aroma; and his decrepit heart clutches at the staff of God. Even the most resilient who rely on their own intellectual and physical energy and feel no need for the support of God, have odds to face, and then they strike the depths of their own personality, plunge into themselves, seek from the fountain within fresh inspiration and emerge with renescent energy. These also have prayed to and sought only God, the Strength of the strong (*Balam balavatam chaham; Sa vai balam balinam cha aparesham*), like the philosophers who worship the Brahman which is their own Self and everything. Aesthetes and artists

who adore beauty, scholars who pay homage to knowledge, patriots who glorify sacrifice, humanitarians who esteem service, moralists who bow before the moral order—all these worship only at the shrine of God. For hath not the Lord said, "Whatever possesses grandeur, goodness, beauty and strength, know that as a manifestation of a part of Myself?"

Among no other people of the world is the belief in a Supreme Being, all-powerful and benevolent, master and at the same time friend in need, so strong and widespread as among the Hindus. It is however somewhat unfortunate that accounts of Hindu theism available in English are from the writings of biassed Westerners. It is their complaint that the Upanishadic monism or pantheism, the Puranic polytheism, the worship of all sorts of spirits, trees, stones, etc., by the masses,—these have made the emergence of a genuine monotheistic God impossible in Hinduism. It is true that the Rigvedic hymns and the Puranic religion pray to a number of deities, but it must be plain to any student of Hinduism that there is no such thing as polytheism in it; when one deity is praised and prayed to, it is for the time Supreme. God is only one; the several gods are but names and forms of the One. In the Rigvedic hymns themselves, the idea

dawns that God is one but the wise call Him differently. Whatever path one takes, and whichever cult one professes, he reaches the same goal of the one God. This explains why Hinduism is able to be so remarkably tolerant and free from the unhealthy proselytising zeal and to be so rich in its growth. Indeed, its growth has been rich, for we note that this is the one religion which has the scientific outlook, as it fundamentally recognises that men vary in taste and capacity and that all cannot be forced into one way. To suit the conditions of the candidates, here is available a rich variety of means.

The idea of God has triumphed throughout the history of Hinduism. The philosophy of the attributeless Absolute of the Upanishads is not one that excludes God and prayer. In the striving stage, a personal God is sought after, and who have left us more glorious hymns than Sri Sankara and his followers? There are among worshippers of the Brahman those like the author of the Bhagavata who say: "Neither actionlessness (Naishkarmya) nor knowledge (Jnana) has any charm, if they are void of devotion to a personal God." Knowledge, like mere morality, hardly forms a substitute for God and devotion to His entrancing personality. Other systems of philosophy which began with sporting their agnosticism or atheism, finished up by developing theistic complexes. Buddhism began to worship the teeth and nails of its founder, created a crowded mythology, and threw up a vast mass of Tantric literature for esoteric worship. The Sankhya and the Mimamsa which ignored and refuted God became 'Sesvara-samkhya' and

'Sesvara-mimamsa'. There is a tradition preserved in a rare commentary available in manuscript in the Madras Government Oriental MSS Library, that the well-known Sivamahimnahstava was written by the great Mimamsa philosopher Kumārila. The Yoga accepted God as a Teacher. And the realists (i.e., logicians: the Vaiseshikas and the Naiyayikas) admitted God from the very beginning; they accepted Him as the grand author of this masterpiece of the Universe. Firm believers in Causation, how could they escape the realisation of an omniscient and omnipotent Architect behind, when they contemplated upon Nature and Man?

It is also the complaint of the critics mentioned above that the doctrine of Karma contradicts the omnipotence of the Lord. The law of Karma does not limit the power of God; it only sets on man the responsibility for his own future. God is not only a King who rules by Law but also a Dictator who can rule by suspending the Law He Himself made. In later Hindu theism will be found a great development of the doctrine of Grace; and many a prayer appeals to God's power to tear up the balance-sheet of Karma and manifest His unlimited compassion and forgiveness. Separate hymns were sung on the Lord's compassion like 'Dayasataka' and on His forgiveness like 'Kshamashodasi'. Nilakanthadikshita asks Goddess Minakshi: "If you have the compassion that I should be saved, save; why weigh the good and the bad in my acts? You who are free to make or end the world, to abide by the law of Karma! Who can be deceived by this?" Balambhatta says: "Lord

your heart is all compassion; still you do not free me who am being kicked up and down like a ball. Do you say that there are past acts which remain to be experienced by me? Of what use is your compassion when I have gone through them?"

God is first conceived as the creator and guardian of the Universe. This gives rise to the conception of the Lord as father and mother. The perfection of affection is in the concept of Mother; and God, the Father, becomes God, the Mother—Matribhuta, Tayum-anavar. The perfection of help is in the concept of Sakhya (friendship), and God thus becomes the Friend. Utmost obedience and service are exemplified by a servant; and this evolved Bhakti on the lines of Dasya. The acme of the feeling of attachment which holds two souls together is found in love, and from this developed the idea of God as the Lover and the aspirant's soul as the beloved—a form of devotion in which mystics of all ages and realms have revelled. The idea is already seen in the Gita when Arjuna asks of the Lord: "Bear with my shortcomings as a lover would, those of his beloved." The South Indian Vaishnava saints and the Bhagavata developed this fully and bequeathed it to later sects like those of Vallabha and Chaitanya. It is not the conception of Krishna

alone which inspired this kind of devotion. Saiva saints of the South and of Kashmir poured forth their equally charming lyrics of God-love on Siva. Love is the most dominant of man's emotions; and what surer path is there for saving him than that which our spiritual psycho-analysts have devised, namely, giving that love an object like God, the source and embodiment of all beauty and love-drawing excellences?

In ecstatic joy, one simply exclaims names; in excruciating pain also, one cries out only names. There are thus prayers which simply call out God in a thousand names. The Name or the Names of the Lord attained a special importance in the history of Devotion in Hinduism. It came to be held that the Name was even greater than the Lord and that it saved even if it was uttered inadvertantly. Devotees like Ayyaval (Sridhara Venkatesa) sang special hymns on God's Name (the Akhyasashti). The repetition of God's Name establishes the devotee's soul in God, and slowly the devotee becomes absorbed in God in silence. Of similar and equal efficacy is the chanting of hymns; it matters not if one does not understand their meaning; the very *Nada*, resounding in his whole being, washes away man's sin and sorrow.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

In the previous Sutra the general principle underlying the negative aspect of spiritual practice was enunciated as renunciation, both external and internal, of the ego and its various expressions in life, as well as everything that has a tendency to exercise and strengthen the lower animal instincts and impulses of man. Here one has only to avoid scrupulously things, thoughts, feeling and actions which are proposed by self-interest and worldly outlook, which, if unchecked and uncontrolled, would perpetuate Samsara. The next Sutra goes one step further. It insists that one should never rest contented by mere avoidance of evil but must follow it up consciously by an active practice of good for its own sake. One should actively try to express in one's life all the divine perfections which one inherently possesses. The Divine is eternally present in the human breast as the Antaryamin, and his divinity and perfection, though temporarily smothered by the ego, is incessantly struggling for self-expression. In positive Sadhana one takes advantage of this natural urge of the human soul for perfection. All possible circumstances and situations are created for its expression. Thus the natural capacity of man to distinguish the true from the false, the right from the wrong, the beautiful from the ugly,

and to love and appreciate goodness and beauty for their own sake, and to guide one's life in the light of these, is constantly exercised and strengthened. Only so far as he makes use of this capacity to manifest his divine perfection does he earn the title to be considered a human-being at all. Even the natural instincts and impulses are not bad in themselves. They have their own beneficent purpose to serve in the early stages of the ascent. Those can also be pruned and trimmed, and guided into right channels by what the psychologists call the process of sublimation. Bad habits of thought, feeling and action, have to be counteracted by cultivation of good habits, and such good habits can be formed only by constant and repeated exercises. Such exercises often run counter to the demands of the natural man. It is an uphill task, a swimming against the current of one's own past Samskaras or inherent tendencies, requiring the exercise of a good deal of will power. All training in scientific and philosophical method and outlook and aesthetic appreciation, and a virtuous life of constant selfless service, and love of goodness, beauty and truth, are all thus helpful in spiritual practice. Philosophy and science, art and morality, are all thus requisitioned to serve as hand-

maids to religion, which is the manifestation of the Divinity already inherent in man. It means the culture of Sattva-guna and the Daivi-sampat referred to in the Gita, by means not only of Tyaga but also by Yoga. The next Sutra emphasises this point.

अव्यावृत्तभजनात् ॥ ३६ ॥

By uninterrupted¹ loving service.

Note 1. Uninterrupted—Practice must be regular, punctual and steady. All teachers agree on this point. Thus Patanjali refers to it in Sutra I:14. Practice becomes perfect by long, constant efforts with great love for the end to be attained. The Brahmasutra also refers to it in IV:1. 1. Breaks in spiritual practice are not advisable if one can possibly avoid them. They not only nullify the good effects of previous practice, but often cause positive, permanent injury. It will be opening the gates of the fortress to the enemy who has been once driven out. There are of course noble exceptions like Visvamitra who, in spite of repeated falls, still persisted till the highest was attained. To the wise and courageous (Dhira), every failure is only a stepping-stone to success. But to the craven-minded, one failure is sufficient to unnerve them and induce them to give up the struggle for good. As Bhartrihari says, "The craven-minded do not dare to begin at all for fear of obstacles; the ordinary man retires and gives up the attempt once for all, when he meets with obstacles in the course of his struggle; but the hero is he who persists in the face of innumerable obstacles that repeatedly thwart him from attaining his object." In fact it only adds to his zest if the

hero meets obstacles on the way. He never yields of his own accord. But circumstances may be such as to compel him often to take rest and gather strength for a fresh assault. Break may thus come in spite of one's best efforts, but then one should begin again as soon as the weather clears and circumstances again become favourable. Thus on account of disease or other causes, if it has to be suspended temporarily, he should take up the thread again at the first opportunity. Even if the obstacles come, the struggle itself is not to be given up and the inner fires must still be kept burning. This spirit of struggle itself against odds that stand against him gives a continuity to the Sadhana in spite of the temporary lull. In such cases, the principle of Gita II:40 and VI:40 holds good and saves him. These passages point out that if one practises spiritual Sadhana in the right spirit and by the proper methods, one does not come to grief even if a break appears in the middle due to circumstances beyond one's control. Such breaks are not real breaks at all, as there is continuity of inner aspiration and struggle even in periods of lull. In his commentary on Gita VII:3, while commenting upon the expression *yatatam api siddhanam*, Sankara takes care to note that a man who struggles sincerely for the highest is already as good as a Siddha, meaning thereby that it is this sincere struggle that really constitutes the real practice. Breaks become injurious only if they are caused by wanton negligence or carelessness, or by temptations of the flesh. Any conscious yielding to such temptation and sin makes a man weaker and thus causes more or less perma-

nent injury. It will be like the fate of the man trying to climb up a tree, lets loose his hold in the middle on account of his carelessness or being tempted to catch at some other attractive object such as a beautiful bird flitting nearby. It is this yielding to weakness and temptation that one has to be afraid of.

A doubt may arise here as to the possibility of such continuity in practice. No doubt activity cannot go on continuously for a length of time as it causes fatigue. There must be intervals of rest ; and real rest only helps the furtherance of the object in view. Over enthusiasm, sometimes on the other hand, leads to over exercise and this in its turn leads to untoward consequences such as diseases, madness, etc. But rest does not necessarily mean an absence of all activity. As psychologists have pointed out, and educational practice bears out, rest need be only a change of work. Again, it is only when work is undertaken without interest that fatigue often intervenes to cause trouble. If one is really interested in the activity, it ceases to be a task and takes on the form of play. It is well-known how, even if the exercise of muscles involved in play is more strenuous and taxing than ordinary work, the latter often causes fatigue sooner than the former. That is why Patanjali and other Acharyas insist upon the element of interest in, and reverence for, the ideal. One should take interest even in the struggle. "The prize," in the words of Robert Browning, "is in the process." A good way of keeping up interest is to provide sufficient variety, which also provides the necessary rest. Such variety in the nature of the acti-

vity is therefore allowable and should not be mistaken for discontinuity, since the spirit behind the various activities as well as the struggle to express the divine perfections will have their own continuity in spite of the apparent break in the external activity. Thus, meditation and worship, Japam and Sankirtana, study and service of devotees, acts of loving charity and performance of one's own daily duties, pilgrimages and witnessing of drama on noble themes, all may be given their rightful share in the scheme of practice and may be allowed to alternate with one another to provide the necessary rest and interest. That it is possible to have these varieties and yet to have continuity in real Sadhana is illustrated by Sri Ramakrishna in his own life and teachings. Note the various illustrations he gives, such as that of the village maiden carrying water on her head, the wife awaiting her husband's arrival while at the same time cooking his meals with one hand, and nursing her child with the other hand.

2. *Loving service*—The word Bhajana is a correlative of Bhakti both of which come from the same root Bhaj. Bhajana represents the activity, while Bhakti the essential accompaniment of it. Any act done out of love for God, is therefore Bhajana. Also such acts as are accompaniments of love, as witnessed in the life of real Bhaktas and taught by them, may be undertaken by the Sadhaka to cultivate this love for God. Thus prayer and dancing and social service may all be undertaken, even if they are not in the first instance the result of love, for these will result in such love in the long run.

Psychologists like James and Lange have emphasised this aspect of emotions as accompaniments of certain activities. Only these activities must be undertaken sincerely and consciously for the sake of cultivating this love, as otherwise they may degenerate and become harmful. Prahalada's enumeration of the nine kinds of this Bhajana in Bhagavata VII:5,

23 and 24, not only provides the variety but also the exercises for Bhakti culture. One may also put oneself mentally into all kinds of relationship with God such as friend, servant, husband, parent, etc., to induce this kind of love for the Lord. Everything that cultivates this love is Bhajana or loving service.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Message of the Gita: (*As interpreted by Sri Aurobindo*). Edited by Anilbaran Roy. Published by George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., Museum Street, London. Copies to be had at Gita Prachar Karyalaya, 108/11, Manoharpookur Road, Kalighat P. O. Calcutta. Price 7 sh. 6d. or Rs. 5. Pages 280. Demy Size.

In the vast body of Gita literature, both ancient and modern, the present publication of S. J. Anilbaran Roy occupies an important place. For it makes accessible to the general public, the substance of the monumental writing of Sri Aurobindo on the Gita published in two bulky volumes under the caption, 'Essays on the Gita'. One who is not a specialist in Gita literature will find the original writing of Sri Aurobindo a bit too difficult due to its voluminousness, its soaring thoughts and language, its want of a regular textual translation, and its being more in the nature of general reflections than exposition of individual verses. S. J. Roy's edition seeks to obviate all these difficulties. It contains the text and a very lucid translation of the Gita, together with brief but adequate notes on the verses. These notes are adapted from Sri Aurobindo's essays, and are largely in his own words. Thus the present edition comes very near in form to the method of commentary writing developed in this country in the exposition of scriptures.

While commending this book heartily to our readers, it may not perhaps be out

of place here to touch upon two important features of Sri Aurobindo's exposition of the Gita. Among modern interpreters of this great scripture, he is the one who has always kept in view and pointedly insisted that the Gita is not a mere Nitisastra (a book of ethics), but is, as it describes itself, primarily an 'Upanishad' (a book of mystic wisdom) and a 'Yogasastra' (a scripture on Divine Communion), dealing with Brahma-vidya (Knowledge of Brahman). The supreme word of the Gita is not duty but surrender to the Divine. It prescribes duty as disinterested action, not with a view to subordinate man to a purely political or humanitarian ideal, but to educate him to seek fulfilment in the Supreme Lord. Due to his firm grasp of this truth, Sri Aurobindo's 'Essays on the Gita' never comes down to the level of mere scholarship or barren dialectics. It is always fervent and scintillating with devotional spirit, and one may even say, that few commentators, whether ancient or modern, have succeeded so well as Sri Aurobindo in bringing the inspirational quality of the Gita text into the commentary also.

The other striking feature of 'The Essays on the Gita' is the doctrine of Purushottama it propounds. The Gita, it is pointed out, is an attempt to synthesise the duality of Prakriti and Purusha, of the changeful man and the changeless Unity, by discovering behind them the Supreme Lord, the Purushottama, who, though both the one and the many, both change and changelessness, is yet above these

polarities and aloof from Nature and attachments to it. Thus the Supreme Being has a threefold status, the Kshara or the mutable, the Akshara or the immutable, and Uttama or the Supreme Lord. The Uttama is all, both mutability and immutability, and what transcends their oppositions. And it is also pointed out that this Uttama is not a mere unrelated Absolute, but the Supreme Person as well—the Master of the universe, and the Father, Mother, Friend and Lover of the devotee. He touches creation at every point, but is yet unaffected by it.

It is sometimes suggested that this analysis of the Gita doctrine is entirely new. To our mind this novelty is only apparent. Sri Aurobindo has attempted only to analyse the spiritual implications of the Gita, but has not tried to correlate intellectually the various facts thus obtained in a full-fledged philosophical system. As long as this is not done, one is saved from the very troublesome task of explaining the type of relation that exists between Kshara, Akshara and Purushottama. But when this problem is once faced, Sri Aurobindo's interpretation will naturally have to include itself either in some variety of the system of identity-in-difference (Bhedabheda), or in the system of pure spiritual monism with its implication of Mayavada. To us the latter seems to be more satisfactory as an intellectual explanation in so far as it is the only system which gives us some explanation as to how the One Being expresses itself as the many without its unity and purity being in any way impaired thereby. There is nothing in the doctrine of the threefold Purusha and its unique spiritual implications brought out so well in 'The Essays on the Gita', which cannot be brought within the sphere of the Maya theory.

We hope Sj. Anilbaran Roy's valuable adaptation of these illuminating 'Essays' will have a very wide circulation.

Art and Meditation: By Anagarika B. Govinda. Published by The Allahabad Block Works, Allahabad. Pages 110.

According to Anagarika Govinda no real art is possible without meditation. It is meditation that taps the well of life and

discovers the hidden mysteries of the soul to which art gives expression. "In order to hear he must be silent, in order to see he must close his eyes to external forms, in order to feel the cosmic rhythm he must arrest his breath and master his art—and in order to be carried by the eternal streams he must give up his selfish desires." Saintliness and artistic genius are the different expressions of creativeness. "The creative artist will realise his visions in his works of art, the holy one in his life." Those who remain at the surface are the wise; those who return again to the world in order to distribute the precious elixir are the creative minds; but those who themselves become the vessel and give themselves to the world are the All-compassionate ones, the Deliverers of humanity, the Enlightened Ones."

Art and meditation though seeming to move in opposite directions are essentially creative states of the mind and are phases of the same movement. Art is not imitation. As in meditation art deletes accidentals of form and captures the essential features of an experience. Meditation is the state of conception, art and life its expressions. "Here art and religious life meet in a sphere of consciousness where no such distinction exists. Therefore wherever religion is a living force, it finds its natural expression in art, in fact, it becomes art itself,—just as art in its highest attainments becomes religion. Art is the measure for the living quality of religion." Such are the intimate relations existing between art and meditation.

The author discusses the problem of the subject and object in art and finds art to be essentially subjective and therefore expressive of higher truth than the logical formulations of the objective intellect. But this subjectivity does not exclude objectivity; it goes behind the object by the intuitive process and reveals what intellect fails to see. Thus, "the most perfect individual self-expression is the most perfect objective description of the world." Our author agrees with Goethe that "the highest works of art are those which possess the highest truth, but no trace of (objective) reality."

The book makes an ardent plea for the spiritual training of the Connoisseur of art as much as of the artist, Eastern art, es-

pecially Buddhistic, is the works of Yogis." The followers of Zen aimed at direct communion with the inner nature of things, regarding their outward accessories only as impediments to a clear perception of truth." "But the faculty of responding to the inner meaning of such works of art has to be cultivated in the same measure as the faculty to express their meaning in visible forms." But this is mostly forgotten.

Anagarika B. Govinda distinguishes between abstract and concrete art by the difference of effects produced by them and not by their processes. Abstract art is not the allegorical representation of abstract concepts which are obtained by logical operations of analysis and deduction. Abstract art, on the other hand, is inductive and constructive and proceeds "by emphasising and developing essential features by which all secondary features are suppressed if not entirely eliminated, so that the life which was hidden under the surface becomes intensified and more real to our consciousness." A piece of abstract art represents a certain mental or emotional state in the development of an artist. The best example of abstract art is music.

The book contains twelve paintings of the author. In an introduction to these he explains the fundamental forms and colours symbolical of the cosmic processes of creation, preservation, and destruction of the universe. The pictures are all in black and white sketches. They represent the results of cosmic, ecstatic, and concentric meditations as well as of meditations of Nature. They are unlike the ordinary forms of pictorial art and consist solely of the movements of the three fundamental forms, the cube, the cylinder and the sphere, and in this lies their originality and uniqueness.

Few artists have expounded the science of their art. The analytical temperament is a break on creative genius. An exposition of the deep psychological movements by the artist himself is a rare thing and so much the more valuable. In a few brief, but lucid and brilliant chapters, the author has compressed a world of ideas. Anagarika B. Govinda's study of the subject will be an invaluable aid in understanding

and appreciating not only his own art and the artist in him but all art and artists in general. The book is a rare and valuable addition to the literature on art, while the pictures themselves reveal wonderful mysteries and rhythms of the universe.

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The Human Family and India: By Dr. Gualtherus, H. Mees, M.A., (Cantab), LL.D. (Leyden). To be had of Taraporevala & Sons & Co., Treasure House of Books, Hornby Road, Fort, Bombay. Pp. 171. Price: Paper Rs. 1-2, cloth Rs. 1-14.

Dr. Mees is a student of ancient Hindu society and the author of *Dharma & Society*, the review of which has already appeared in our columns. He approaches the subject with a warm heart and tries to interpret in the psychological idioms of modern age. He has a thorough grasp of the social thought of Europe and a sympathetic understanding of Hindu religion. The present book offers a brilliant defence of Hindu social theory as conceived by its originators, but not the modern travesty of it in the crystallised caste-system of modern India. It is based on the lectures he delivered on Hindu Sociological theories and their bearing on contemporary world-problems, in some of the universities during his stay in India to have first-hand acquaintance with the Indian social conditions.

The book is divided into five chapters devoted to a wide variety of interesting topics—Hindu Sociology, nationalism and Internationalism, Revolution and coming world-stage. He begins with a comparative study of different phases of Hindu Society—theoretical, ideal and actual, in the light of modern sociological theories followed by a review of international situation with ingenious reflections on the emergence of dictatorial governments in Italy, Germany and Russia; and then passes on to explain the necessity of a better reconstruction of the world-polity on the basis of the Hindu sociological principle of *Chaturvarnya*. The world is weltering in chaos and suffering from the baneful effects of exaggerated nationalism caught in the iron grip of unbridled capitalism. The object of the author is to show

that social science of ancient India complemented by modern thought provides a key to the solution of various social and political world problems (which are therefore India's problems too).

Much of the indictment of India is connected with her social structure. We find that intelligent and honest opinions are ranged against each other in their appraisal of the value of the institution of caste; it is being maligned by some as a disruptive factor, while others look upon it as the exalted product of the social vision of Hindu thinkers. The learned author has traced this divergence of opinions to the faulty understanding of the meaning of the word, 'caste', which must be differentiated from that of 'Varna.' Original propounders of Hindu social theory took into consideration the principle of '*Chaturvarnya*' by which is meant universal hierarchical division of mankind into four classes, namely, Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. This division, variously designated, is a universal social phenomenon which is bound to appear in any form of social integration, ancient or modern. We have this fact amply corroborated by copious references to early scriptures and socio-political treatises. This theory, according to the author, implies further, the organic conception of society as adumbrated in *Purushasukta* and *Vishnupurana*. That each 'Varna' was to function socially in a graduated scale of relations and that the value of each individual comprising it was an end in himself, were thoroughly recognised. Thus the original Varna theory recognises 'the social organic inequality and spiritual equality of men, between vertical picture of society and horizontal picture of humanity.' The ghastly spectre of modern caste-system on hereditary occupational basis is 'against the intention and social vision of ancient social leaders of India.' We must revert back to the principle of *Chaturvarnya*.

The theory of 'Varna Sankara', the confusion of classes, is being wrongly interpreted by some orthodox writers of Dharma Shastras. This danger was pointed out not as a prevention against admixture of castes, but only to keep each individual to his sphere of social contribution as determined by his natural aptitudes

and capabilities. Thus the writer rightly points out that 'this class-confusion theory was applied to caste and instead of serving its purpose as a warning, it then contributed to the crystallisation of caste-system, the very thing they meant to prevent.' Reviewing with sagacity the happenings on the international chessboard the writer opines, "The period we are living in now is the period of manual labour and of the man of commerce, of the Sudras and Vaisyas..... But neither is, in the natural course of things, meant to rule, to take the foremost place. An unbridled commercial capitalism may form a danger to society." Much of the chaos and despair in the modern society of Europe and Asia can be attributed to governmental power being usurped by classes belonging to third or fourth Varna of caste-hierarchy. This is the real phenomena of 'Class-confusion' so much derided by ancient lawgivers of India.

The chapter on nationalism and internationalism is very illuminating. In the last chapter of the book the author presents the foreshadowings of the much desired world-state. Signs are visible which lend countenance to such a confident look into future. Enlightened thinkers of all countries are dreaming of such a thing. In the meantime, in order to save world-culture from an impending crash as a result of imperialistic nations being embroiled in world-war, an ideological movement must be set on foot. It should aim at rallying all the good forces of the world and preach socialising and humanitarian doctrines which may influence the national Unconscious. "Men will have to realise much more clearly again that population classes in societies are not natural enemies, but have to be co-operators in the common cause of well being." These ideas, moreover, are to be reinforced by a sort of idealism which will rivet the attention of mankind on the spiritual background of life. In other words individuals and nations must once more conceive the world as one human family, each keeping to a particular sphere of contribution to common welfare for the onward march of humanity towards light, perfection and happiness. The book is neatly got up and deserves to be read by all who take any

interest in the social and political problems of the day.

Abhinavagupta, an historical and philosophical study: By K. C. Pandey, M.A., PH.D., M.O.L., Shastri, with a Foreword by Mm. Dr. Ganganath Jha. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Benares. Pp. ix+487.

Indian philosophic lore seems to be inexhaustible even as the Lake Manasa. Much work has been done by way of editing Sanskrit texts, translating them and expounding the thoughts enshrined therein. But much more remains to be accomplished. The number of ancient treatises on one or other of the systems of Indian thought brought to light so far is legion, not to speak of the manuscripts which have not yet been discovered but which are known by name from references in other books. It is a happy sign of the times that Indian Philosophy is no longer brushed aside as unworthy of serious attention, but is engaging the thoughts of scholars both in the East and in the West in an increasing measure.

One of the systems of Indian Philosophy which traces its origin to the hoary past is monistic Saivism known as the Trika or Pratyabhijna system which spread to, and took root in, Kashmir in the 9th century A.D. The philosopher who has presented this system in the most thorough fashion is Abhinavagupta (born between 950 and 960 A.D.) known in the field of literature not so much for his philosophical works as for his treatises on poetics. But his service for Pratyabhijna Saivism is no less important. And so, it is but proper that Dr. Pandey should have chosen to devote the volume under review to a clear exposition of the philosophical views of the great preceptor.

The book consists of two parts, the first historical and the second philosophical. As every investigator into the historicity of an ancient Hindu philosopher is bound to meet with difficulties, Dr. Pandey also experiences certain indefiniteness about the identity, date and domicile of his subject. Upon such evidence as he could gather he decides that the Abhinavagupta whose philosophy he expounds was different from his namesake, a Sakta contemporary

of Sankaracharya, that he was born in Kashmir between 950 and 960 A.D., and that he is the highest authority on the monistic Saivism in respect of both its rituals and its philosophy, as well as on the poetical theories of Rasa and Dhvani. Abstracts of his various works are given and from them the traditions that were current in his time are traced. In the second part, the philosophy of Pratyabhijna is set forth, and Dr. Pandey characterises it as "Realistic Idealism." There is an exhaustive account of all the categories of the system, and rival Darsanas are criticized in the orthodox manner. The value of the book is enhanced by the Appendices which contain textual authorities for the observations made in the body of the thesis, and the philosophical hymns written by Abhinava. We commend this work to all lovers of Indian thought.

T. M. P. MAHADEVAN, M.A., PH.D.

Vedic Prayers: By Swami Sambuddhananda. Published by the author, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Khar, Bombay 21. Price 8 as. Foreign 1 sh. Pages XIV+94. Pocket size.

This small prayer book contains about sixty short passages culled from the Vedic literature and beautifully printed on good paper with word-for-word and running translation into English and some notes, each printed tastefully one below the other and the text occupying the top. Of these, 31 stanzas are from the very well-known and often translated and repeatedly printed Svetasvatara, Taittiriya, Kena, Prasna, Isa, Mandukya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads; and 6 stanzas are the famous Santipatha or peace invocations commonly appearing at the opening of these popular Upanishads. The remaining 21 stanzas are from the Rig, Yajus and Sama Samhitas; 10, 3, 8 stanzas being taken from each in respective order. In purity, vigour, depth, melody, directness of appeal and immediacy of apprehension Vedic invocations are unparalleled, and as such to repeat and reflect on a few of them at least will have undoubtedly a soothing and edifying influence over minds that are distracted by the preoccupations of the modern age. To those who realise it this book can be a useful acquisition.

NEWS AND REPORTS

New President

Swami Virajananda, direct disciple of Swami Vivekananda, has been elected President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in place of Swami Suddhananda, who passed away last month.

Inspired by the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Virajananda renounced the world and joined the Ramakrishna Order at Baranagore in 1891, at the age of 17. He had the rare privilege of living with most of the direct disciples of the Master.

After Swami Vivekananda's return from the West in 1897, Swami Virajananda had the opportunity of serving him personally. In the same year, he was initiated into *Sannyasa* and was sent to Eastern Bengal on a preaching tour. During the next few years, he was in different parts of Northern India particularly at the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, in the district of Almora. He was made a trustee of the Belur Math in 1906, and in the same year was put in charge of the Mayavati Ashram on the demise of its first president, Swami Swarupananda. He held that office till 1913, and was also the Editor of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, the English monthly journal of the Order.

The next year Swami Virajananda founded in the Almora district "the Vivekananda Ashrama" at Shyamala Tal, where he passed many years in meditation amid the quiet and the sublimity of the Himalayan forest.

In 1926, the Swami came down to the Belur Math to attend the first Convention of the Order. Thereafter he was actively in touch with the work of the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, of which he was elected Secretary in 1934 and Vice-President in May last—*Hindu*.

Opening of a new Shrine in the Madras Math

The New Shrine of Sri Ramakrishna was consecrated in the Madras Math at early dawn November 7, 1938, with due ceremony in the presence of a large number of devotees and worshippers. The Shrine which has been built out of the funds provided by Mr. P. S. Narasimha

Iyer, Retired Executive Engineer, is situated in the first floor of the Math, immediately behind the previous shrine which is now converted into a prayer-hall. The altar enshrines a relic of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa; and his life-size portrait is mounted on an ornamented ebony and marble pedestal under a velvet canopy embroidered with gold. Special Puja, Abhishekam, Homa and other holy rituals were performed by the Swamis of the Math and the inmates of the Ramakrishna Student's Home chanted verses from the Vedas and the Bhagavad-Gita. At noon Prasadam was distributed to over 150 devotees and the function thus terminated.

Hindu Temple in Hollywood

The Vedanta Society of Los Angeles a branch of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission of India, completed the dedication of a new temple in July. It is located within that part of the city of Los Angeles known as Hollywood. Thus again, in a sense, extremes meet. What is at its centre one of the most ancient and most inward of religions sets up a monument in the community whose name stands, in popular imagination the world over, for what is in the highest degree modern and glamorous.

As early as 1930, under the devoted leadership of Swami Prabhavananda, the Vedanta Society of Los Angeles had its origin. Recently, in co-operation with a sister society in San Francisco, it added to its usual activities the publication of a new magazine—*The Voice of India*. The erection of its temple represents a further and very important step in its development.

The structure, of white stucco, is architecturally a pleasing adaptation of Moorish-Indian, its domes and finials causing it to stand out sharply from its residential environment as Oriental. The largest and central of its three domes is an imitation of the dome of the Hindu temple at Benares. A spacious and well-designed approach extending from the street a distance of some sixty feet to its doors adds much to its attractiveness.

The auditorium seats normally and easily one hundred and fifty persons. On

its side walls are moderate-sized representations of Buddha, Christ, Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Brahmananda. These pictures, tastefully framed, the white walls and ceiling, the leaded clear-glass windows, and three crystal chandeliers combine to produce an impression at once simple and elegant. Behind the speaker's platform, in the centre, is the shrine-room, within which are representations of Buddha, Christ, Sri Ramakrishna, and Holy Mother. To the left of the Shrine-room as one looks from the auditorium, is the organ and library room; to the right, a study.

Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar, for 1937

Surrounded by picturesque natural scenery and away from the bustle of town, this Residential High School for young boys is situated in a place which is both a health-resort and a centre of pilgrimage. It is mainly an institution for paying boys, and a good standard is maintained in diet, games, discipline and other matters essential to a high class educational institution of its type. The management and tuition is carried on by the monastic members of the Ramakrishna Mission assisted by a very few lay teachers who have offered their loving service on a small pittance. The institution is keeping up its record of progress from year to year. In the reported year there were in all 139 boys on the roll, of which two were free students, 23 concession-holders and the rest paying. The staff consisted of 13 graduates and 14 under-graduates. The results were brilliant; of the 7 boys sent up 4 were placed in the first division and the rest in the second—all getting some mark of efficiency. Special care was taken for physical development and real sports-man spirit and discipline was fostered through outdoor games, mass drill, band and other devices. Type-writing and gardening are the useful crafts in which the boys received training. A genuine *esprit de corps* was creat-

ed and sustained through Boys' Courts, celebrations of festivals, excursions, congregational *Bhajanas*, debates and other arrangements and activities of the type. In short, the Vidyapith with a staff inspired by a high spiritual ideal, an intelligently planned procedure of work, a man-making educational outlook and a bracing atmosphere of moral and religious vigour, has made a significant contribution qualitatively, though not quantitatively, to the regeneration of the motherland. The management looks forward for funds to ensure its solidarity and further progress by erecting a Prayer-hall, a library and reading-room and a gymnasium at an estimated cost of Rs. 15,000, Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 3,500 respectively and also by endowments for the maintenance of poor students, specially qualified staff and the vocational department.

Ramakrishna Mission's Relief Work

In the week ending 17th November 1939 mds. 22 srs. of rice were distributed among 3263 recipients of 80 villages from 6 relief centres of the Mission in Faridpur and Murshidabad Districts in Bengal.

Medical : The Charitable Dispensaries conducted by the Mission Relief camps at Paresnathpur and Kedarchandpur in Murshidabad District with a view to curing malaria and other ailments that appeared in the wake of the floods treated 1570 cases of which 760 were malarial.

Expenditure : We shall have to spend Rs. 1200 more before the work is wound up.

Cyclone Relief in Orissa : The inspection of the cyclone-affected area in Orissa is being continued. Relief work may be begun shortly.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by (1) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O., Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, (2) The President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Mylapore, Madras.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—*Sri Sri Vivekananda*

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXV]

JANUARY, 1939

[No. 9

HINDU ETHICS

यजन् यज्ञान् यजत्येनं जपत्येनं जपन् नृप । निध्नन्नन्यान् हिनस्त्येनं सर्वभूतो यतो हरिः ॥
परापवादं पैशून्यमनृतं च न भाषते । अन्योद्वेगकरं वापि तोष्यते तेन केशवः ॥
परदारपरद्रव्यपरहिंसासु यो रतिम् । न करोति पुमान् भूप तोष्यते तेन केशवः ॥
न ताडयति नो हन्ति प्राणिनोऽन्यांश्च देहिनः । यो मनुष्यो मनुष्येन्द्र तोष्यते तेन केशवः ॥
देवद्विजगुरुणां च शुश्रूषासु सदोद्यतः । तोष्यते तेन गोविन्दः पुरुषेण नरेश्वर ॥
यथात्मनि च पुत्रे च सर्वभूतेषु यस्तथा । हितकामो हरिस्तेन सर्वथा तोष्यते सुखम् ॥
यस्य रागादिदोषेण न दुष्टं नृप मानसम् । विशुद्धचेतसा विष्णुस्तोष्यते तेन सर्वदा ॥

He who sacrifices worships Him, He who repeats His Name also worships Him. So also the man who outrages others really outrages Him, for Hari (the Supreme Being Who gravitates all towards Him) is all beings. The Lord is propitious to him who utters no falsehood, slanders none, brings discredit upon nobody and expresses no word that may cause grief or fear to others. God is propitiated by him who never harasses or destroys any member of the animal kingdom. Govinda, the Divine One taught in the Scriptures, is favourably disposed to that person who is ever alert in extending service and worship to the Divinities, the spiritually reborn and the Preceptor. The Lord is easily pleased by that one who is anxious for the welfare of all beings as his own or his children's welfare. The Omnipresent One is always delighted at the mind that is unsullied by passion, hatred, greed and other vices.

Vishnu Purana.

JNANA, BHAKTI AND KARMA

[In this and the ensuing issues for the year, we shall publish a series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna's views on the fundamental problems of spiritual life based on his recorded sayings. In the course of these studies we shall also have occasion to take a passing view of many questions of absorbing interest in modern life and thought. 'Jnana, Bhakti and Karma' forms the ninth of the series.]

I

IN India, aspirants who take to spiritual life seriously are expected to follow one or the other of the Yogas. The original meaning of the word Yoga is 'union'. In application to spiritual life it means 'union with God', and the several Yogas may be described as the 'ways of union with the Divine'. They are generally described as four in number—Jnana Yoga or the way of Knowledge, Raja Yoga or the way of psychic control, Bhakti Yoga or the way of Love, and Karma Yoga or the way of Work. While all the four of these have their own distinctiveness and can be described as separate paths, the general tendency is to reduce them to two—the way of Knowledge and the way of Love, ascribing to the other two the position of auxiliary disciplines. The reason for this is not far to seek. For Raja Yoga deals mainly with the technique of concentration, and concentration being essential for every path, Raja Yoga can be easily incorporated with any of them. Karma Yoga too can be interpreted as the ethical discipline of the different paths. Thus Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga become the two main ways of Divine realisation.

In the Master's teachings also this tendency is in evidence. For example, one of the important, and perhaps

unique, features of Raja Yoga is the control of breath, with a view to suspend it completely as an aid to concentration. According to the Master, this state of suspension, technically known as Kumbhaka, comes naturally when the clamourings of the mind are hushed. It is attained also through Bhakti Yoga; for when the mind is filled with intense love of God, the breath gets suspended. And as for concentration and meditation, these the Master recommends to all who take seriously to spiritual life. "Meditate on God either in an obscure corner, or in the solitude of a forest or within the silent sanctuary of your own heart,"—so runs the Master's advice to all spiritual aspirants. In the case of one who follows the path of Love, concentration and meditation would centre round some personal aspect of the Deity, while a follower of the path of Knowledge would meditate on the Impersonal Self.

II

To the path of Work too the Master does not give a separate place. His views on this subject require a more elaborate treatment, as this particular path has a special appeal to the socialistic and public-spirited temperament of the modern man. The Master does not recommend for spiritual aspirants either feverish activity

as an end in itself, nor any forced abstinence from work as a necessary condition of spiritual growth. With the shallow altruism which is confident of redeeming the world by indulging in some restless philanthropic activity, he has little sympathy. "You talk glibly of doing good to the world," he says, addressing men of this type. "The world to which you desire to do good—is it so small a thing? In the next place, who are you, pray, to do good to the world? First go through devotional practices and see God. Then it is that inspiration and power will come down to you, and you may talk of doing good. Not till then."

But, then, is man to keep quiet till then? No; he has to do works like meditation, chanting of hymns, repetition of holy 'names' and other devotional exercises, besides worldly duties necessary to get on in the world. In this list of pious works mentioned, must also be included acts of service done with the conviction that the Lord dwells in all beings and in society at large, and that all service is therefore worship offered to Him. Here the motive of service is neither the creation of the millennium nor a condescending pity for others, but the consciousness that all beings are verily God Himself. But while doing works of service and works of duty, an aspirant must pay to the Lord earnestly for His grace and for strength to do works without expectation of any reward or fear of punishment in this world and the next.

If realising God through devotion and meditation is the end of life, why should a spiritual aspirant work? The Master answers: "Because man cannot get rid of work. Nature will

lead him on to it." It is true that a man of pure Sattva finds pleasure only in meditation of God. Such men are few and far between, and their hearts being full of Divine love, work falls off naturally from them. Even if they try, they cannot work; for God would not allow them to work as a mother-in-law would not allow a daughter-in-law with a newly-born child to do any household work, her sole duty being to nurse the child. The majority of spiritual aspirants are not like that. Even if they are endowed with Sattva, it has a strong bias toward Rajas or active temperament. Work being thus inevitable for them, let them do it as it ought to be done. To do work as it ought to be done means to perform the duties of life like the maintenance of the family in accordance with the principles of righteousness, to undertake altruistic work, social and political, as well as to perform worship, Japa and other devotional practices, without any selfish attachment to their fruits and to the sole end that God may be glorified through them. With complete dedication to the Lord one should behave like a maidservant in the household of a rich man. This is Karma Yoga. Its secret consists in practising devotion side by side with work in the spirit described above. By continuing to work thus with devotion and non-attachment, even an ordinary man becomes gradually purged of Rajas and comes to be endowed with pure Sattva; then only he realises God.

The Master, however, is emphatic in declaring that though work is thus important in the life of the aspirant, it is only a means, God alone being

the end. Let not a stage in the journey be taken for the destination. "Suppose you are fortunate to see God," he says, addressing the shallow-minded philanthropists, "what would you pray for? Would you pray for dispensaries and hospitals, tanks and wells, roads and alms-houses? No, these are realities to us as long as we do not see God. But once we are face to face with the Divine, we see them as they are—transitory things no better than dreams. And then we would pray for more light, more knowledge in the highest sense, more Divine love."

It should not be inferred from this that the Master is against the ideal of Lokasangraha, the promotion of world's interest, as depicted in the Gita. His idea is that only a few men of the highest spiritual realisation are capable of real Lokasangraha. "After a well is dug," says he, "some throw away all the spades and baskets, but others again keep them with the idea that they may be of some use to any of their neighbours. Divine Incarnations and great sages like Narada resemble this latter type. They have the highest realisation; yet they are moved with pity at the sight of the sufferings of the world. They are not so selfish as to care for the attainment of Jnana for themselves."

It would be seen from this account of the Master's views on the path of Work, that his tendency is to look upon it as a part of the path of devotion in the Gita sense. To quote his own words: "In this age work without devotion has no legs to stand upon. Apart from love of God it is helpless."

III

We shall now take up the two main paths — the path of Knowledge (Jnana) and the path of Love. The path of Knowledge is essentially a discipline of keen intellectual analysis coupled with an intense spirit of discrimination and dispassion. The aspirant's object is to reject one aspect after another of the phenomenal world as unreal until he reaches a point where all discrimination between the real and the unreal stops and Brahman is realised in Samadhi. A thief enters a dark room and feels the various articles therein. He lays his hands on one article after another in the room and rejects them saying, "Not this, not this," until he gets at the box containing cash and ornaments. Then he exclaims, "It is here!" and there his search ends. Such, indeed, is the search after Brahman.

While this searching analysis of the aspirant may be directed towards the whole of the experienced world, its chief point of attack is one's own ego. For says the Master: "If a man knows his own Self, he knows other beings and God. What is my ego? Is it my hand or feet, flesh or blood, muscles or tendons? Ponder deeply, and you shall know that there is no such thing as 'I'. As you peel off the skin of an onion, you find it consists only of skin; you cannot find any kernel in it. So on analysing the ego, it will be found that there is no real entity you can call 'I'. Such an analysis of the ego convinces one that the ultimate substance is God alone. When egotism drops away, Divinity manifests Itself."

From the nature of the discipline it would be seen that it presupposes initial qualifications of a very high order in the aspirant. To reject the external world and the various layers of one's personality as unreal requires dispassion and discrimination of a very high order. To show the world as unreal by devices of logic may be comparatively easy; but a spiritual aspirant is more than a logician, and his problem is to feel in his pulse the truth of what is demonstrated by his reason. If one is full of worldly attachments, any amount of logical demonstration of the world's unreality would not help one convert one's whole being to the conviction dictated by the intellect. For when we attach the highest value to the world, it will only be the summit of hypocrisy to speak of that thing as unreal. And in the case of such a one 'the moment sense objects like colours, tastes and the rest appear before him, he takes them to be real in spite of his intellectual convictions to the contrary, and gets entangled in them just like a man who verbally denies the existence of thorns, but bursts out screaming as soon as his hand is lacerated by one'.

Men ordinarily lack in this quality of dispassion, because the body-consciousness is very strongly established in them. It is the needs of the body that make us cling to worldly objects and make it so impossible for us to experience their unreality. Besides, the follower of the path of Knowledge is required to assert the identity of his real Self with the Divine as given in the formula, 'I am He'. But so long as there is bodily attachment, analysis does not take one to the real Self and one is bound

to commit the grave mistake of taking the 'I' of this great assertion to be the ego and other lower aspects of personality. Hence to an aspirant who was in the habit of repeating, "I am He, I am He," the Master once remarked: "What is the use of merely repeating, 'I am He.' It is only when one, by perfect meditation on the Lord in the temple of one's heart has lost all idea of 'self' and realised the Lord within, that one is entitled to utter these sacred words. What good can the bare repetition do without realisation? So long as the stage of realisation is not reached, it is better to regard the Lord as the Master and oneself as his humble servant."

This brings us to the consideration of the path of Love or Bhakti Yoga.

III

In contrast to the path of Knowledge the path of Love is easy to practise for a beginner. Not that pure and disinterested love of God is very common. According to the Master, "It is a rare thing—this love of God. Pure Bhakti arises only when there is whole-hearted devotion to God such as that of a chaste wife to her husband." While the higher form of Bhakti is thus as rare as Jnana—in fact they are identical at a certain stage of development—the advantage of it lies in that one can make a beginning even without such a high standard of qualifications as in the path of Knowledge. The body consciousness may be there, the control over the senses may not be complete, and the feeling of reality with regard to the objects of the world may still be strong. Yet a man can start on the devotional path, provided he has

faith in the Divine and is capable of feeling an inkling of love for Him. Further he can also utilise his tendency to action as an aid to devotion by practising Karma Yoga. If the aspirant is sincere in his faith and love, he will gradually and in a smooth and natural fashion attain what the Jnani gains with his uncompromising discriminative faculty coupled with strong dispassion. For with the growth of Divine love the pleasures of the senses become more and more insipid, and self-control comes by itself. As a tiger devours animals of the forest, devotion devours the animal in man such as lust, anger and the rest. As the magnetic rock under the sea pulls out the nails of the ship, separates plank from plank and sinks the vessel in the deep, the magnet of God removes all selfishness and egotism from the devotee and plunges his soul in God's infinite love.

The secret of progress in the path of devotion lies in cultivating the feeling that God is one's own, and in maintaining towards Him a particular attitude. At first the devotee's mind may be pre-occupied more with the power and glory of God, and there may be some formality in his relation with Him as when two people are only superficially acquainted. This is the stage of Vaidhi-bhakti, when a man's devotional life is strictly regulated by scriptural injunctions. But when it matures into Raga-bhakti or devotion of love, the devotee ceases to be preoccupied with His power aspect and begins to feel towards Him an intimacy akin to what is felt in the closest worldly relationship without, however, prejudice to the consciousness of His divinity. He gets absorb-

ed in the sweetness of His love untainted by any element of fear or strangeness. In this connection the Master speaks of the various Bhavas or devotional attitudes of the Vaishnavas, as those of the servant towards the master (Dasya), of the friend towards the friend (Sakhya), of the parent towards the child (Vatsalya), and of the beloved towards the sweet-heart (Madhura).

Sri Ramakrishna also makes mention of seven stages in the disciplines of the path of devotion. These may be summarised as follows: 1st. Sadhusanga, or the company of holy men; 2nd. Sraddha, or faith in, and devotion to, matters relating to the spirit; 3rd. Nishtha, or single-minded devotion to one's ideal; 4th. Bhakti, or intense love of God; 5th. Bhava, or the state of speechless absorption in the thought of God; 6th. Mahabhava. When Bhava is intensified, it is called Mahabhava. Then the devotee sometimes laughs and sometimes weeps like a mad man. He has completely conquered the flesh and has no consciousness of his body. This stage is not found in ordinary men but only in Mahapurushas and Divine Incarnations. 7th. Prema. It goes hand in hand with Mahabhava. The two marks of this stage are, first, the forgetfulness of the world, and second, the forgetfulness of the self which includes one's own body.

In concluding this aspect of the Master's teachings, we have to clear one common misunderstanding in connection with it. There is a belief that the Master was a Bhakta only and not a Jnani. This is due to a failure to understand three import-

ant points connected with the Master and his teachings. No doubt, his recorded teachings deal more with Bhakti than with Jnana, and that is because he believes, as we have shown, that Bhakti is the easiest path for the majority of men. As for the Master himself, he was equally great in Jnana and in Bhakti, and he expressed this secret of his life when he said that he is all Bhakti outside and Jnana inside. In fact the Bhakti that is manifest in him is not like that of the aspirant for whom God is yet the other. The Master realised non-duality in transcendental consciousness, and he also came to recognise God, the ego and the world as the expressions of that non-dual Brahman as Power (Shakti). His experience he compares to luni-solar light—the illumination produced by the simultaneous presence of sun and moon in the sky. Again he describes it as sitting on the threshold of a room, *i.e.*, having a simultaneous experience of the Absolute and the relative, just as a man sitting on the threshold has a full view of what is within and without. He calls this state Bhavamukha, and one would be committing a gross mistake to classify the Master as Jnani or Bhakta without understanding the secret of this state.

Thus in his own case Jnana and Bhakti are only the obverse and reverse of the same coin. From the point of view of an aspirant, Jnana and Bhakti may be different as paths, and the respective disciplines and attitudes cultivated by the followers of the two paths may be different. As for the Master himself, he had followed both the paths separately at different times, and could therefore speak with authority as to the culmination that they both lead to. This culmination, according to him, is the same in both, the difference being only at the preparatory stages. "Pure Knowledge and pure Love are both the same," he says. "The same Being Whom the Vedantins call Brahman is called Atman by Yogis and Bhagavan by the Bhaktas. One and the same Brahmin is called 'priest' when he conducts worship, and 'cook' when he is employed in the kitchen."

When devotion matures, there dawns the illumination of Knowledge in which the ice-berg of Divine Personality dissolves into the formless expanse of the Impersonal Absolute. So also when the knowing one who has experienced Samadhi regains the ego after that experience, he realises the Absolute Brahman as the Divine Personality.

THE PATH OF SPIRITUALITY

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[Swami Yatiswarananda, formerly Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is at present preaching the message of Vedanta in different countries of Central Europe. The following advice addressed to spiritual aspirants is reproduced from the notes of his class talks at Wiesbaden, Germany.]

ALWAYS try to follow the moral path; the spiritual path. There are people who have no sense of impurity; the more they commit wrong the more they become callous. All their moral sensitiveness is destroyed. They have no sense of shame. One should stop all brooding over one's past, whatever it may have been like. What is done is done for all times and can never be undone. So think of purity; think of what you are going to do in future, not of what you did in the past. He who thinks himself to be pure becomes pure. Try to efface the past as much as possible. Try to efface all old associations and impressions by replacing them with better and purer ones.

Swami Vivekananda used to say, "Why do you think so much of sin? Will more dirt wash off dirt?" You do not become pure by thinking of impurity, you will never get rid of sin by thinking you are a sinner. This is wrong psychology and will always produce just the opposite effect. If we dwell too much over these thoughts of sin and impurity, we lose sight of the fact that with our own spiritual striving we can achieve something. Always try to follow the positive method. Instead of thinking, 'O what a sinner I am, O, how impure I am', just think, "Purity is my birth-right and my true nature. I

am free by nature. My very nature is purity and holiness."

For the aspirant the conscious shifting of the centre of consciousness is one of the most important points. There are the physiological, the mental and the spiritual functions. In some people the centre of consciousness is the stomach, *e.g.*, gluttons and drunkards. In others it is the heart, the lower emotions. The thought aspect is far more important. The root-cause of all impurities must be removed, not only its manifestation. Repression and the formation of complexes as such is not bad. They are necessary for a time as steps to complete sublimation which comes much later. Why raise such a hue and cry about complexes? Complexes are formed, whatever we do. Sex indulgence creates a complex in one form, repression in another form, so we have to see which will lead us to something higher, more positive, which will make us freer and freer and help us in reaching the highest goal. We are continually forming complexes on the relative plane whatever we do. There are natural laws in the spiritual world, and the physiological laws are not the only laws to be observed. In these matters one must be one's own doctor. Every beginner should make it a point to avoid all dangerous stimuli in whatever form they may come to him. The tender plant has to be

protected by a hedge. Spiritual life must be lived, and that requires the development of tremendous will-power and concentration. It is not for sluggards and weaklings. "If you have faith in all the gods and goddesses, but no faith in yourself, there is no salvation." The sense of sin can be very good in the case of some temperaments, but only if it serves as a goad. It must goad us on to something better. But a far better means to get rid of all these encrustations of impurity is to think of our eternal, innate purity which is our first nature. We are all our own ancestors, seen from the spiritual stand-point, and only reap what we ourselves have sown. Re-incarnation is not the most vital point. We have to try to get full illumination in this very life. So re-incarnation should never be stressed very much. If our present life is the result of our own past, then we can change our future. Karma is never identical with fate. The law of Karma is the law of self-effort, intelligent, conscious, self-effort, never a teaching of fatalism and lethargy.

There are some people who cannot remain satisfied with leading the worldly life, and yearn for something higher, for greater freedom. There will always be many who fall down on the way. What to do? You just let them lie where they are and pass onward. The goal must always be kept sight of, without looking to the left or right, without even caring for the results and the fruits. If somebody just accompanies you a bit of the way out of so-called love, this becomes very dangerous. Such people only want to coil their so-called love around you like an octopus.

Rather let their heart break before allowing them to do this. All such love is mere ego written with capital letters, and nothing but that. It is the satisfaction of our own emotions and impulses, but never love in the true sense of the term. Such people only want to drag you down, entangle you in their meshes and possess you as their own property. There are people who are somewhat serious-minded from very childhood. They have never adapted themselves to the ideas of the worldly-minded, and for them there are but few dangers and difficulties. Never mind what people may be saying about heartlessness and so on, if they mean by heart and love mere emotionalism. One must learn to be very stiff even if the heart breaks. True love never wants to coil itself around anyone and stifle him, and all other love is attachment and has to be got rid of. You must learn to be very stiff and uncompromising in this. Do not let yourself be caught in the meshes of such sentimental possessive love. "Ah, we were meant for each other. We have been waiting for each other."—All sentimental nonsense and foolishness!

All the great Ones and Incarnations have come and taught mankind the same eternal truths again and again, but the world just goes on merrily its own way, and those are really very clever who are able to get out of its meshes. Empty emotionalism and sentimentality are the worst enemies in the spiritual path. If you only follow the path half way without reaching its end, there will be no end of misery and trouble. There are the centripetal and the centrifugal forces acting on us. We are safe if we fly off at a

tangent and be safe at the axis, but nowhere else can we find any safety.

The pure heart becomes the reflector of truth. So does the purified, thoughtful mind. In the highest realisation both are transcended; heart and mind cease to be. Awakened definite thinking becomes progressively alive to the ideals of higher life. The purer the mind, the better thinking it does, the better does it reflect. So long as we cling to the false puppets and idols of love that we cherish in our hearts, it is not possible to have at the same time a sincere, deep yearning for God, whatever we may pretend to have. It becomes all empty make-believe. But for everybody there may come a time when these dolls lose all their charm; then only comes a true and deep yearning for the spiritual life; then all things worldly become 'saltless'.

Once there was a great saint who was told by his daughter, "Father, the day is approaching its end." (This was before he had renounced everything and become a saint.) "Really, is it so?" he replied and left hearth and home. He had understood the deeper meaning of the words in a way his daughter had never thought of. Before following the path of spirituality our great poet-saint Tulsidas had a very deep love and attachment for his wife. His attachment was so strong that he even followed her when she had gone to visit her parents. Then his wife said to him, "Had you loved God so intensely as you love this body of mine, you would have realised Him long ago and would not be to-day what you are." The very same day Tulsidas gave up the world with all its ties and left his wife. Narada, before becoming a saint, once

went to a very great teacher. "Sir," he said, "I have studied all the Scriptures, but there is no peace in me. I am full of grief. Do you save me?" Then the Guru asked him, "Well, what have you learnt? Please tell me." "All the Vedas, mathematics, philosophy, all the different branches of knowledge." "Well, my boy," said the Guru, "you have only learnt words, but words cannot bring realisation." And then he showed him the proper way step by step.

The Lord is of the essence of Bliss and knowing Him alone one becomes blissful. That which is infinite alone can bring peace and happiness. There is no peace in what is little or limited or finite.

Cases of complete sudden renunciation are very rare. Mostly we find temporary renunciation after heavy blow has fallen on our heads. But afterwards such people get entangled all the more in 'Woman and Gold' and become human puppets, in the puppet-show of human love. Then they say, "Oh, we know, we ourselves have tested the spiritual life. There is nothing in it after all. These human relations have a far greater truth. We are meant for each other." All stuff and nonsense and the sign of a weak and muddled brain.

If all have hobbies, why not have a better hobby? Why run eternally after the mirage? Where is the perfectly sane man? All lunatics think themselves sane, and the worldly man, too, is nothing but a lunatic. Before attaining the state of Self-realisation, perfect sanity is out of the question, whatever we may think ourselves to be. The cleverness of the crow does not mean anything. It seems to be very clever, but loves eating filth and

dirt. Many very clever people are just like vultures; they soar very high intellectually, but they just wait for the piece of carrion they are going to swallow and enjoy.

The whole world is drunk with the wine of 'Woman and Gold,' the wine of ignorance, and has become mad, so that it does not know what it does and what to do. All have become 'carrion-eaters.' Here and there you just find one who does not drink this wine of 'Woman and Gold,' who wants a better wine, some different intoxicant that counteracts the effect of this fatal worldly wine. But you will always find that person persecuted who dares to think for himself, who dares to think boldly and freely and dares to mould his life according to higher standards. You should see that you develop great intensity and very great singleness of purpose. Sometimes you can 'help' another with the great fire you have kindled in yourself. And such a 'help' if done in the spirit of pure, absolutely selfless service, is something very great indeed.

"Blessed is the family and blessed is the mother whose son takes to the monastic life." At the beginning this God-love seems to destroy. It destroys many things, all the dross and the non-essentials; but though it seems so, it only fulfils. The only true, eternal, unchangeable love is that which makes the heart beat in the eternal rhythm, which gives non-attachment born of true spirituality. One who has that love loves all with wonderful sympathy and same-sightedness although he may appear to have no love for any person. True love of perfect purity is always spiritual; and no love in which there is any

form of attachment can ever be spiritual, whatever else it may be and however beautiful it may seem to our blinded eyes for the time being.

Most people just want to follow the beaten track, and so very naturally there comes a parting of the ways between those who want to follow the higher life and attain to true love, and those who just go in for 'Woman and Gold' in its grosser and subtler forms. How can you ever follow the beaten track, once you have become awakened? It is in such moments, the moments of your first awakening, that you are put to the test; because in such moments there comes this natural parting of the ways. Then you must be able to fight through or give up the idea of spiritual life. But first you must get a good whipping to awaken your enthusiasm, and whoever is not prepared to get this whipping and stand it, must be dropped as chaff. We must be put to the test again and again, and we must be able to develop a spirit of determination that knows no fear. If we get a good thrashing to rouse enthusiasm, we must be prepared to stand it and see it through.

See how terribly restless people have become. They run to cinema-shows, to the theatre, to church, to lectures, to anything and everything, because their centre of gravity is wholly outside themselves, if there is any centre of gravity left at all. "Why just take the trouble of thinking, why fatigue the mind?" This is their attitude, and thus they become more and more slaves to this out-going tendency of mind and get more and more entangled in the meshes of ignorance.

Why should the mind be troubled by thinking, especially, when anyone goes to the house of God? Why not just allow oneself to be lulled into something like sleep, into some vague and pleasant day-dreaming? Thinking is not at all desirable—at least this is what the majority of modern men and women think. Why do more men go to Church now and then and listen to some sermon in a thoughtless, more or less vague, way? But then, spiritually speaking, this does not mean anything at all. For such people it would be far better not to go to Church at all and do something which forces them to learn to be wide-awake and conscious, to think and act.

There are some people who are sincere, but all their sincerity is of no avail, because they have no backbone, because they are too soft. We must cut at the very root of all this emotionalism and false love, this personal clinging to some man or some

woman "meant for us eternally". All stuff and nonsense and nothing more than that. All beautiful romance, but never the reality. We must become merciless in this. There is no place at all for this kind of softness in spiritual life. The spiritual man must be as hard as adamant and as soft as a flower. Some people may call this cruel, but is there anything more cruel and more enslaving than this so-called love of the worldly-minded, clinging to each other, enslaving each other just for the sake of the satisfaction of some personal craving of theirs? They do not love the other person, they just are in love with their own sentiment and its satisfaction. We must mercilessly strike at the very root of all such forms of love and have done with them once for all. Let the heart break, if it breaks. Sometimes such hearts must be broken, otherwise, for them, there will never be any progress.

IS THERE ONE TRADITION COMMON TO EAST AND WEST?

By Dr. Adolphe Ferriere

[Dr. Ferriere is the Founding Member and Member of the Executive Board, New Education Fellowship, and a reputed author and thinker of France. The new spiritual outlook that he has brought to bear upon Educational psychology is extending to wider and wider circles of people as a renovating influence of great significance. In the ensuing article he goes behind the apparent diversities of Eastern and Western traditions with a penetrative eye, and discovers a grand unity, already recognised by a very few savants even in the West. The English translation of it from the original French we owe to Swami Siddheswarananda, who, as our readers already know, is at Paris for the last two years expounding the spiritual culture of India to an increasing number of interested Europeans.]

IF the universe is one, if God is one, there must exist hidden under all the verities, one unique Truth.

Let us recall here the prophetic sentence of the Rigveda: "Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti"—"There

exists one single God. To Him, men have given many names." To discover, under all the sacred traditions of different countries and different periods, "the stream of the divine," is what the seekers after wisdom have endeavoured to do. And if it is true that the original source of all thought is the agreement between human reason and Divine Reason, the ordaining thought of the Cosmos (which word in Greek means: Order) it is necessary to trace back from the various mythologies, symbologies, and traditions to the one origin; The conception of the cosmic Totality.

In his book *General Introduction to the study of the Hindu Doctrines*¹, a French author, M. Rene Guenon—who is reported to have been instructed by an authentic Sadhu in Vedantic Wisdom—affirms that no Western thinker knows the philosophy of Totality. He writes, "Occidentals never knew of the whole cosmic metaphysics." That simply shows he does not know of numerous philosophers who take that for their basis; amongst such I may mention my own professor of philosophy: J. J. Gourd who was teaching forty years ago in the University of Geneva. Quite recently M. Henri-L. Mieville, professor at the University of Lausanne, published a book entitled *Towards a philosophy of the Mind or of Totality*². He shows that all is in all, that from the Unique the multiple emanates, and that never can one of the terms be radically separated or isolated from the other. Such was most certainly the attitude of thinkers of all times and most religions. "The

Doctrine of Unity is one," say the Arabs. The same idea was expressed in excellent fashion by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu: "All beliefs, all faiths spring from the same source . . . this source is the need which humanity feels. I do not say that they come from God. I say they come from our need of God. I do not say that God created man, I say that man in his urgent and imperious necessity creates and recreates God each day."³

All duality is included in the whole. This also must be understood. Therefore liberty and necessity co-exist; similarly "the acceptance of the world" and "the refusal of the world." The philosopher Albert Schweitzer in his book *The Thinkers of India* places these two terms in opposition. Does he not limit too much the sense or senses one can give them? Does not denial of the world mean also to turn away from the partial views of egoism and from a dead rationalism in order to realise the harmony between the little "I" and the One great cosmic Being? On the contrary, will not the acceptance of the world signify, with the sages and saints, harmony with the spiritual cosmos realised in and through the world where we live? But those definitions are exactly contrary to those which M. Albert Schweitzer gives.

Each concept is opposed to what is different from it. Everything is in the present. The present includes Eternity. Only—to our limited eyes—the evolution of things and beings in time and space appears to imply, according to tradition, one single and

¹ Paris 1932, Vega.

² Lausanne, 1937, Les Trois Collines.

³ *Action et Pensée*, Geneva, September, 1937.

total starting-point: God the Creator. From this one God would emanate all separate existences. But here intervene good and bad. In some measure to be separate from the All, while really remaining connected with that All, is good. To separate oneself from it so completely as to lose sight of one's participation with Totality, is to realise egoism or evil. Salvation, redemption, consists in repelling Satan, Egoism, the partial and incomplete activity, to turn back to God. *Inquietum est cor meum, Domine*, wrote Saint Augustin, *do nec requiescat in te* (Restless is my heart, Lord, until it reposes in Thee).

The starting-point, where man was still in direct relation with his Creator—a symbol common to Hebraic tradition as well as to many others—supposes that man, does not descend from the ape (a degenerate being), as a certain materialistic science suggests, but from God.

This accord of the primitive being in tune with the cosmos, we find again in the little child. That is how we should interpret the words of Christ: "If you do not become like unto those little ones, ye will not enter the Kingdom of God." Modern psychology confirms this view. M. Jean Piaget, professor in the University of Geneva and Director of the International Bureau of Education, in his books *The birth of intelligence in the child* and *The construction of the real in the child*, shows very well that all development depends upon the "Structures" (or the 'schemes') that echo in the human mind the constant laws of the cosmos. Leon Brunschwig and Meyerson also find this centre of gravity, or rather, this axis

that traverses in the human being even before it has learned to think.

And not only psychology but also pedagogy confirms those views. In this connection, my book *The Activity School*, recently published in Allahabad⁴ with commentaries on the New Education by Gandhi, Tagore, Bhagvan Das and Zakir Hussain reveals a striking agreement between the most authentic theories of India and what is called "The active school" in Europe and America. The role Zakir Hussain plays in the organisation of pedagogical India of today confers incomparable importance to his unqualified adhesion to the "Activity school" such as I have described. But more significant still is the concordance of the views of Bhagvan Das; for he only read one brief resume of the fundamental principles of my philosophy of education, and he comments on them. "What did M. Ferriere mean by such and such word?" he asks. "This is the sense I would give to it", he adds. And his commentaries say exactly, identically, what I say in my book! This agreement with one of the wise men of India was a source of great joy for me.

The three stages: Primordial wisdom, conscious rationality and return to God, enable us to understand how certain phenomena—for example those we call 'telepathy'—are to be found again in certain primitive men (or in men who come back, by pathological deviation, to the primitive nature) and in other

⁴ By M. K. G. Sadyidain, professor of education in the Muslim University of Aligarh. (Published by Kitabistan, Allahabad).

men who have pushed their spiritual development very far towards wisdom and contact with God. The influence of primitive magic of certain beings, which we consider diabolic, is of the same kind, as well as the beneficent and ennobling radiance of the sage which stands at the other extreme. Primitive imagination and penetrating intuition of the cultivated being are complementary.

And here we find one of the essential teachings of India, that the West must learn little by little: true religion is not merely an object of purely intellectual speculations, it must be *lived*. Wisdom must not only be thought, it must incarnate itself in man. In other words, conscious mind must arise—not without the intellect, but with its aid which is always limited,—towards the identification of the human soul with the Divine. And here we agree with Rene Guenon. "In metaphysics," says he, "it is the inexpressible that is essential. . . . Metaphysics cannot be contrary to reason, but is above reason."⁵ In this respect Yoga signifies "the effective union of the human being with the Universal." The same idea was expressed by Swami Pavitrananda, President of the Advaita Asrama, and ex-editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*. He says: "Religion is a matter of inner growth, and spiritual development. . . . Religion is not a belief in one creed or one particular doctrine; religion is the realisation of truth."⁶ At this level the doctrines elaborated by thought are only a bridge towards the beyond.

Each concept of the intellect contains some truth and some error, because of the insufficiency of human reason. Reason isolates, separates, mutilates for its own sake, (as is shown by the Latin etymology of the word 'ratio'). But what does it matter, since it is the research of truth that is of the greatest consequence? Each doctrine is good in so far as it leads to this research after truth and love in the higher sense of the term. Rene Guenon appears not to have understood it. Nevertheless he showed a presentiment of it in his book *The king of the world*⁷ when he said: "The sky is hidden rather than lost since it is not lost for all and since some still possess it fully; and if it is so, others can find it again, provided they search in the right way, that is, their intention be so directed that by the "harmonic vibrations" it awakes, according to the law of "concordant action and reaction," it could place them in effective spiritual communication with the supreme centre." Does this not give the key to the spiritual and social role of the authentic Yogin whose immobility appears to the Westerner as symbolising the absence of all preoccupation for the well-being of others? Certainly the contemplative is 'not working' if one limits the sense of the word to the voluntary, exterior and visible action. But is not his invisible radiant 'telepathic' action (according to the spiritual sense of the word 'radiant' and perhaps also according to its physical sense) all the more intense? In maintaining the Divine principles, in ensuring the circulation of those principles by a real 'emission' of

⁵ Op. cit., p. 102.

⁶ Address to Bengal Teachers' Association, March 1937.

⁷ Paris, *Cahiers du Portique*, 1937, p. 95.

spiritual life, by 'fluid' or divine radiance, inundating the souls ready to receive it, the anchorite would be literally the "channel of Grace." Rene Guenon again writes, "The transcending Being, placed in the centre of things no longer participates in the movement of things, but, in reality, directs the movement by His mere presence, for in Him is reflected 'the activity of heaven'." Is this not the meaning of the term Chakravarti?

Now we arrive at the end of these converging considerations and we reach the threshold of the question put in the beginning of this article. Is there *one* tradition from which all secondary traditions, to our limited eyes primordial, of India and of the West were derived? Have Vedanta and Christianity in their inmost source one common origin?

How can we know it? Should we accept the hypothesis which makes them proceed from one extremely ancient civilisation not far from the North Pole? The connection between certain graphic symbols and the sky as it appears in the North Pole—the circle of the Zodiac among others—have led savants, amongst whom Oscar Wirth, to think that what is common to the various civilisations of Eurasia would proceed from there. Amongst the similarities which ought to be considered, there are two which I would mention here: language and astrology.

Many are the researches conducted on the unique origin of languages spoken by man. But it is necessary here to emancipate oneself from narrow literalism. It is necessary to interpret. India knows that art.

Ananda Coomaraswamy designates it by a name employed by the Greeks: "Hermencia⁹". M. Gleizes wrote on this subject: "This constant use of certain symbolic terms and of their 'technical' significance, in some traditional formulas so far removed from one another in time and space, can only be explained if one considers these "diverse formulations of a common doctrine (Dharmaparyaya) as so many dialects of one and the same language of the spirit or branches of one and the same universal and unanimous tradition (Sanatana Dharma)."

The second point where researches could be fruitful is, as I said, astrology. In the West, however, traditional astrology, issued from the middle age and Islam, appears to be stuffed with superstition and absurdities. A European thinker of grand merit, M. K. E. Krafft, basing himself partly on experimental observations (more than one million of controlled observations) and partly on knowledge transmitted by occultism of diverse antique traditions, has succeeded to set up what he calls 'typocosmy' (etymologically, the knowledge of the diverse "trade marks" of the Cosmos), a kind of coherent renovated astrology—in accord perhaps with primordial astrology, extremely ancient and now forgotten. I cannot develop the subject here. If any psychologist-astrologist in India would desire to enter into relation with me, we would put in common our concrete knowledge and observations. Here more than in any other realm the truth—astronomic and astrologic, must be one; and the problem is

⁹ Op. cit., pp. 112-113.

⁹ *Etudes traditionnelles*, Nov. 1936.

through all those traditions and appearances to rediscover what they hide of the fundamental reality. For my part, I think that birth (Jati) is the confluence of the race (hereditary Gotrika) and the individual position of the stars and planets at the moment of birth (Namika which is always unique). It forms therefore one indivisible whole which will be modified by circumstances, education and reactions of the essence of the being (nama) and of its substance (rupe) on these surrounding influences. What does 'Jotisha', the fifth among the Vedangas, say to this? What does 'Dasa Paddhati' say? What do they say for instance of our Jupiter, of Brihaspati, the Pontiff of Heaven (etymologically the Latin 'Pontifex' signifies: 'Bridge Builder')?

Ananda Coomaraswamy relates that the Ashvamedha has direct relation with the doctrine of the Rig-Veda and to those of the Upanishads, "which agree with all other orthodox traditions on the union *ab intra* of the complementary principles into the 'supreme identity' as well as on every other essential point".

Such researches are not, I believe, purely abstract theories dictated by curiosity. They concern in some manner the salvation of the future. If the future is the "return to God" and if the primordial traditions contain the essence, we should try to find them again there. We must more

particularly search for the divine way, that of the "participation" of the human life with the divine life, according to the term that one of our more profound contemporary philosophers, Maurice Blondel of Aix-en-Provence (France), employs in his book *Being and beings*. Cannot one affirm with Rene Guenon¹⁰ that "it would be enough if some minds were conscious of the essential unity of all traditional doctrines in their principle", to make a great step towards the spiritual liberation of man? India understood this many thousands of years before the Occident. Devas, says Hindu philosophy, are participants (Bhaktis) of the Divine essence. The original sense of the word Bhakti is effectively that of 'participation'.


For God, although he remains One, manifests and multiplies Himself in the cosmos and in the human Soul, and this is not through a generation bringing rupture, but through emanation, bringing multiplication. The primordial, present and essential bond subsists between the One and the many, which have reciprocal implications. "God created man in his image" and God is living in man. This should not be forgotten. "You would not search me if you had not already found me" says God, according to the well-known words of Pascal. These words are eternally true.

¹⁰ General introduction to the *Study of Hindu doctrines*, p. 339.

JAINISM AND THE JAINS

By Bhai Manilal C. Parekh

[Mr. Parekh is known to our readers through his article on America which we have published a couple of months ago. He is a born Jain. In this paper he gives a lucid and interesting account of Jainism, both historic and descriptive. The length of the article compels us to print it in smaller type.]

 F the many and varied religions of India, Jainism is a peculiar and very important product not only of the Indian genius but of the entire Aryan race. It is singular, however, that whereas Buddhism should have been known and appreciated all over the world, and justly so, Jainism which was an earlier contemporary of the same faith and has run parallel to it for centuries and has even survived it in India, is hardly known except in academic circles outside India. This is because Buddhism has the advantage of numbers, and so it attracted the attention of Western scholars and held it for a long time almost exclusively. For long Jainism was looked upon as an insignificant branch of Buddhism and the scholars thought that they had done their duty by describing it as such. It is to the lasting credit of Hermann Jacobi, however, to prove conclusively to the Western World that Jainism is an altogether independent religion by itself and that both Buddha and Mahavira were contemporaries.

As a matter of fact Mahavira whom the Jains look upon as their last great prophet was an earlier contemporary of Gautama Buddha. The probable date of his birth was B.C. 570—a date which makes him twenty years older than Gautama Buddha. He passed away a few years before the latter, as is testified by the Buddhist books themselves. That he started his work earlier than Gautama Buddha and had already attained the position of a great teacher is proved by the fact that the latter called his movement the Middle Path between two extremes, one of these being the Ritualism and Formalism of the Brahmins and the other being the Asceticism of the Jains.

The life-story of Mahavira may be summarised as follows: He was born of a

royal family in a place called Kundagram, the capital of a province named Vaishali. This part of the country is now known as Bihar, a province in the north-east of India. Mahavira's name, as given by his parents, was Vardhamana, and he was brought up and married like the other princess of his time. His parents passed away when he was twenty-eight years old, and sometime after that he renounced the world. It is said by the Jains that his parents followed the Jain faith especially as taught by Parshwanatha, the great teacher who preceded Mahavira by two hundred and fifty years, and so Mahavira also was ordained in the same faith. At first he joined some Order of monks, but on account of some difference of opinion he left it and began to move about alone. He did this for more than twelve years, during which time he is said to have gone through great trials and tribulations. As a result of these very hard ascetic practices and also these sufferings, which he bore with the greatest equanimity, he is said to have attained perfection. This he did under a tree on the bank of the river Rijupalica near the town Jumbhikagram, and in consequence he knew himself as Jina i.e. the Conqueror, one who has overcome the world and himself. It is from this that the word Jaina i.e. the follower of Jina comes. His proper name thenceforth became Maha Vira, the great hero. Other names have been given to him such as Arhat i.e. one who has killed his enemies (sinful desires etc.) or Tirthankar i.e. one who has established the four Orders of Sadhus (monks) Sadhvis (nuns), Shravaks (laymen) and Shravikas (lay women).

After attaining perfection, Mahavira is said to have preached his doctrine far and wide for about thirty years, as a result of which a large number of men and women

belonging to all, and especially higher, communities in India became his disciples, many of them becoming even monks and nuns. He passed away at the age of seventy-two leaving behind him a well-organised movement at the head of which stood a number of men who were able enough to carry forward his work.

PARSHVA-NATHA

There is not the least doubt about the historicity of Mahavira, but the authentic history of the Jaina religion does not begin here. According to most scholars, it can be traced back at least about two centuries more to the life of Parshwa-natha who is considered to be the last Tirthankar just preceding Mahavira. He is said to have lived about 800 B.C., and all that we can find about him by way of reliable evidence, in the midst of a great mass of legend that has grown round his name, is that he came from a royal family and seeing once the picture of the Tirthankar who, according to Jaina tradition, had preceded him, made up his mind to renounce the world. He was in course of time ordained as a monk and after some time as a result of eighty-four days' intense asceticism attained perfect knowledge. After this he preached his doctrine several years making many disciples, and passed away at the age of about hundred years on a hill called Sumet Shikhar, which is also known by his name. There is a fine temple built here, and this place is considered a place of pilgrimage by the Jainas. This summarises as far back as definite historical evidence goes, though according to the Jain belief there have been twenty-four such Tirthankars in the present period which is one of millions of years, and there have been a similar number of Tirthankars for every such period. The number of such periods is infinite.

PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT

The religion which was thus established by Parswa-natha and was organised into a powerful movement by Mahavira grew in course of time to be a most powerful one, so much so, that its influence on the life and civilisation of India has been only slightly less than that of Buddhism. It is true that the latter had the great good

fortune to go out of India and to be embraced by millions of people all over Asia, especially in the north and in the east, and thus it proved its greater usefulness, but so far as India is concerned Jainism survived Buddhism and perhaps has left a deeper and more abiding impression than its more illustrious contemporary on the life and character of the people.

Mahavira had been able to draw to himself many from among the royal families of his time, and some of the eminent Princes of those days, among them there being no less than the Emperor Chandra Gupta, are recorded by the Jainas as belonging to their faith. It is true, this faith did not have so great an Emperor as Asoka as its follower and patron; but short of this it had all the advantages which a religious movement, which aspires to be a great religious and social power, can have. Both Buddhism and Jainism were protests, not only against the meaningless ritualism and animal sacrifices of the Vedas, but equally against the religious and social supremacy of the Brahmins, which had become an integral part of the old faith. The Kshatriyas i.e. the class next to the Brahmins in the social hierarchy of the Hindus, were naturally very restive under this priestly tyranny imposed in the name of religion, and there were among them many and great teachers who could take their place easily by the side of the best among the Brahmins in matters of learning or spiritual experience. Thus what was nothing less than a large school of Protestant teachers was rising, and Mahavira and Buddha were among them the two foremost leaders who succeeded in founding new and non-Vedic religions. Their moral and spiritual greatness as well as the social revolt on the part of the Kshatriyas against the Brahmin supremacy which was inherent in the new movements, —both these things combined in giving them a great following especially among the aristocracy of the times.

We have seen that it was in Bihar that the new religion had its rise. It soon began to spread therefrom westwards and southwards. Within about three centuries more it had made Mathura, a city near Delhi which has since become a principal centre of Krishna-worship of the Hindus, one of

its chief centres, as is clearly evident from large numbers of inscriptions that are found there dating from the 1st century B.C. to the 5th century A.D. Then we hear of Ujjain, which is further south, as being another very important centre. In this way what we now know as the United Provinces, Central India, etc., were not only evangelised by Jainism but became strongholds thereof.

Not only this. Jainism went much further south long before these comparatively northern parts of India had come to know it. It happened this way. About two centuries after Mahavira had passed away, there was a terrible famine in Bihar, and in consequence a large number of Sadhus left that country for what is now known as Mysore under the leadership of Bhadrabahu. In this way Jainism came to possess a centre in South India, and it spread all round. As a result of these efforts both in the north and in the south, Jainism came to be preached and followed within about a thousand years of its rise since Mahavira practically all over India except Bengal. Later on when Brahminism became powerful and started persecuting both Buddhism and Jainism and re-converting their followers, they both suffered much, and while Buddhism practically as an organised church became extinct, Jainism, though it managed to live, lost large numbers of its adherents and much of its influence.

Later on under the Muslims, Jainism along with Hinduism suffered losses in numbers as well as in influence, and it was only under the British that it attained full freedom of belief as well as of worship. But owing to the many vicissitudes that it had passed through during the last ten centuries or thereabout, it lost much of its missionary zeal, and in spite of all the protection it has had for the last century, it is steadily losing its numbers, and if it goes on losing in this way at the rate it has been doing for the last thirty or forty years, it is only a question of time when it will be totally extinct. The people who profess Jainism are to-day a little over one million, and in every decade it has been losing about a hundred thousand. As it is, the dividing wall between Hinduism and Jainism is not very high; there is

a pull of the numbers or the majority that surround the Jains on all sides and of the theistic character and variegated colour of Hinduism—all these are largely responsible for the steady decrease of number among the Jainas. It must be said also that Hinduism, while assimilating the Jainas, is assimilating some of the best elements of Jainism, thus making transition for the Jains to pass from their own particular faith to that of their neighbours easy.

Though at present Jainism is confined chiefly to Gujrat, Rajputana, Malwa and parts of South India on the Western side, it is evident from inscriptions on rocks and old temples that this faith had at one time spread almost all over India from Kashmere in the north to Mysore and Coorg in the south and from the west coast to Orissa in the east. Its influence on the literatures of these different parts of India is a still greater testimony to the power it wielded wherever it went. It is true it never attained the position which Buddhism did in the time of Asoka and after, nor does it seem to have become a State religion of any of the smaller kingdoms even for any length of time, nor did it become very popular with the masses and the lower classes. Its highly philosophical character and extreme asceticism kept it confined to the aristocracy and the middle classes of the land. To-day the Jainas, for their numbers, are by far the richest community in India, and a great deal of the trade of the country is in their hands.

SECTS IN JAINISM

The principal sects of this faith are two and they are known by the names Digambara and Shvetambara. As in every other religious movement, there were protests and differences among the Jainas from the very beginning. There has been mention of several such in Jain history and literature, but these were of too minor a character to assume the form of sects. It was about six centuries after the passing away of Mahavira that there arose a serious difference which resulted in the division of the Jainas into two groups. Although the origin of these two sects has been differently given by both of them,

the real cause perhaps lies in the following:—

We have already described how a large number of the Sadhus left Bihar under the stress of a terrible famine which lasted for some years and migrated to the south. During this famine those Sadhus who remained in the north could not follow all the commands, laws and regulations of their Order, nor could they keep the memory of the teachings that were handed over to them by the word of mouth. The result was a great disorganization of the faith and the church. To reform this state of things it was thought desirable to hold a conference in Pataliputra, but it was impossible for this Conference to do all the needful. The Canon fixed by it was not accepted by the Sadhus who had gone to the south on their return to the north. Moreover there was a difference between the two bodies in regard to the strictness of the rules to be followed by the Sadhus. The southern school was for a stricter rule, and said that in accordance with Mahavira's command and practice, the Sadhus should not put on any clothes whatsoever and should live as little as possible in touch with society. The northern school was for a laxer observance and its Sadhus had put on white clothes, from which they came to be called Shvetambaras, and the other by the name Digambaras which means clad in space. Of course both these sects claim to be the true followers of Mahavira and each charges the other with having lapsed from their Master's command. This division took place about 80 A.D.

Apart from this there is very little difference between these two sects, and even this difference amounts practically to nothing as the number of Digambar Sadhus was never large, and to-day it is extremely small. It is doubtful if there are a dozen of them living to-day. The present writer is in his middle age, and being a Jain by birth is in close touch with this community all his life, but he has neither seen one such nor heard of any such being present in the neighbourhood in his wide travels all over the land. It is said that there are a few, however, but they are practically hidden from human view and are as good as non-existent. This

difference between the two sections has resulted in a few divergences between them in belief and practice, but all these are of a minor character.

These sects have been divided into sub-sects owing to one cause or another but the difference between these various sub-sects have been chiefly in the region of practice and rarely in matters of belief. Perhaps the most important sub-sect that arose among the Shvetambar Jainas was the one that is known as Sthanakvasi Jainas as distinguished from the Deravasi Jainas, and its origin lay in the fact that about the middle of the fifteenth century a man called Lonka protested against image-worship among the Jainas and established an Order of monks whose work was to preach the pure faith in which there is no room for either idols or temples. This reformer was a scribe, and while copying some ancient manuscripts, he found that the Jainas of his time were practising things for which there was no warrant in the teachings of Mahavira as they had come down from ancient times. The reform that was thus introduced was deeply moral and spiritual, for during some of the centuries that had just preceded there had been a great falling-off from the ideals of Mahavira, and even among the Sadhus corruptions of many kinds were the rule rather than the exception. Many followed Lonka in his reformed views and joined the sect he founded, but as a result of this there was a counter-reformation in the main body, and much good was done. In many respects this reformation of Lonka was very similar to the one brought about by Luther.

Whatever be the number of sects and sub-sects among the Jainas and whatever be their differences in belief and practice all through the ages, there has really been no bloodshed or fighting among them on this account. This is because of the peaceful character of their religion. This peacefulness has been one of the most noteworthy features of the life of the Jainas in their relations with their neighbours of whatever caste or creed, and they have maintained the same in their mutual relations.

LITERATURE

Jainism is a deeply philosophical religion; and it had its rise and spread among a people who were highly intellectual. Owing to this it has always encouraged learning and study among both the Sadhus and the Laity, with the result that Jainism has to its credit a body of literature of all kinds of which any major religion of the world may well be proud. Not only is the quality of this literature as high and varied as any, but its quantity, too, is large. A large number of Sadhus has been devoted to this kind of work from ancient times and in every branch of learning they have written important works. It is true the main body of this literature is religious, and as such it is composed of books on philosophy, devotion, biography, exposition of the Jaina scriptures, etc. but there is also a great deal of literature of semi-secular character such as drama, poetry, science, etc. Like the Buddhists the Jainas were the first to make a large use of the vernaculars of the land, and while the former wrote their principal works in the old days in Pali language, the latter used the language called Magdhi. This was a great innovation made by both Mahavira and Buddha in those early days against the practice of the Brahmins who wanted to confine all the learning to the privileged few belonging to their own class. The Jainas also wrote in Sanskrit so as to reach the more learned classes of the various provinces, and later on, when the modern languages came into existence, they were the first to use them.

The most important portion of this literature is what may be called the Jain Scriptures. They are known as Angas, Upangus, Sutras, etc., and they are said to be eighty-four in number. For several centuries after Mahavira, the teaching given by him was handed down by the word of mouth, but in course of time and especially after the big famine mentioned above, it became impossible to preserve this teaching intact, and as there were serious differences of opinion among the Jainas themselves in regard to this matter, a Council was held in which the Canon was fixed, and the works mentioned above belong to this Canon. It must be said here, however, that this Canon was not accept-

ed by all, especially those who came to be known as Digambaras later on. According to these latter, the true teaching of Mahavira has been lost beyond recovery. These books were reduced to writing for the first time nearly 1000 years after the passing away of Mahavira. It is no wonder then if a great deal of material has been interpolated in course of time. The Digambaras have what may be called Scriptural books of their own, but they frankly say that these are the new editions made by later writers of the original books, and that as such they cannot give them the same place of honour that they would give to the other.

Some of the most important Jaina Scriptures are these : Acharanga Sutra, Suyangdaya Sutra, Sthanagna Sutra, Samvayanga Sutra, Bhagvati Sutra, Kalpa Sutra, etc. In the first two are given the rules to be observed by the Sadhus and Sadhvis. The third and the fourth are philosophical works, and the fifth is devoted to the teaching of the essence of Jainism by means of dialogues etc. Uttaradhyana Sutra is another of a similar kind. These are among the Shvetambara Canon.

Among the most prominent writers who followed the great teachers of the first age, the first is Bhadrabahu Suri who lived about 200 A.D. His greatness lies in this that he is looked upon by both Digambaras and Shvetambaras as their own. He wrote commentaries on most of the principal books of the Jaina Canon and is said to have written books on astronomy also. Umasvati is another great writer whom too, both the sections claim as their own. He wrote important philosophical works and explained thereby the Jaina doctrine. His work Tattvarthadigama Sutra is a book which is recognised by both the Digambaras and Shvetambaras. Siddhasena Divakara, a Shvetambara writer, has written several philosophical works and a standard work on Logic. One of the most voluminous writers of the later period is Haribhadra Suri who wrote no less than 144 devotional and other works as a sort of penance for having once thought of killing as many Buddhist monks. But the most famous of all the Shvetambara authors is Hemchandra who lived from

1088 to 1172. He is said to have composed thirty-five million couplets on all imaginable subjects, and his fame as a great author has gone beyond the bounds of Jaina Society. His most important work is on Yoga and is called Yoga Shastra or Adhyatma Upanishada. He himself was an adept in Yoga, as is evident from the fact that he had remarkable powers of concentration and could do several things at the same time. This immense literary work he did by having several amanuenses sitting round him and his dictating to them all in quick succession. He was also a great statesman and converted the King of Gujrat called Kumarpal to Jainism and got from him a number of rights for the Jainas. It is possibly due to him that even to-day, *i.e.* nearly a thousand years after him, the Jainas have a large influence in the Province of Gujrat.

There have been eminent writers since Hemchandra among the Shve'ambaras and a number of them among the Digambaras, and to mention even a few of these is not possible within the scope of this article. Suffice it to say here that the Jainas interested themselves in every branch of learning and there is not one of them to which they have not contributed something of importance.

One of the specialities of Jaina literature is to be found in the very large body of stories based on the life-histories of the Tirthankars, of some of the later teachers and of many among laymen and even laywomen. There is a great deal of imaginative element introduced in these stories and so they are not reliable as history, but the motive of writing these was not to write history but to give moral teaching to the people. For this purpose the Jainas have explored every field, and when they had finished writing about their own heroes or heroines, they cast about for other matter and re-wrote the lives of the great Hindu heroes from their own point of view. They have done this even with the greatest of them such as Rama and Krishna, and while acknowledging their greatness, have not hesitated to show in their character what has appeared to them as moral failings whatever they might be. Perhaps it is here that one finds the real difference between Hinduism and Jainism.

The first religious lessons of his life that the present writer learnt were from these extremely interesting stories that he heard while he was barely six or seven years old from the lips of his mother, stories which left an indelible impression on his mind.

The Jainas of to-day are in no way behind other people in matters of literary activity. They have started many publishing houses, and these have already translated and published most of their classics in more than one vernacular. There is also some original work being done, and among the modern writers the names of Shrinad Rajchandra and Vijaydharma Suri stand out as those of real significance. The former of these was the man from whom Mahatma Gandhi derived a great deal of his teaching and practice, and although he died very young and did very little of literary work as such, his letters and diary, which form quite a bulky volume, are full of deep religious experience and are such as can be placed by the side of any similar literature anywhere else. The peculiar thing about him was that he had never become a Sadhu and did most of his thinking and writing while remaining busy in the world as a jeweller. The other was a Sadhu and a real leader of men. It is perhaps he who has done the most in re-organising the Jainas as a religious community. He travelled far and wide to awaken them, and wherever he went he organised societies for the purpose of the spread of education or literary activity. He also established libraries and promoted learning by other ways. In addition to this, he saved many MSS. from being lost, did a great deal of research work and edited many books. This was not all. He wrote a number of books in Sanskrit, Gujarati and Hindi for the purpose of interpreting Jaina beliefs and practices. He was also in correspondence with all the important scholars of Jainism, whether in India or Europe, and helped them a great deal in every way possible.

JAINA DOCTRINE

It is one of the cardinal beliefs of the Jainas that their doctrine has been revealed to them by men who were omniscient, and there has been no lack of such men. As a matter of fact from eternity such men have

been found, and their teachings have been handed down from generation to generation. These men become perfect in the process of their own self-evolved development, and it is a part of their perfection to give the true doctrine to humanity. These teachers are called Kevali and their teachings are called Agama. According to them the Universe has been existing always in one form or another, and it has no Creator or Sustainer. It is here that Jainism differs fundamentally from Hinduism which starts with the belief in a Supreme Being or an Over-Soul. However, the Jainas object very strongly to the term *atheists* being applied to them, for they look upon all these perfected beings, whose number is infinite, as so many Divinities or Deities, and offer them worship as the Hindus do. It is in this that Jainism differs from Buddhism, for the latter does not believe in souls, whether perfect or imperfect. Compared to Buddhism of the Hinayana school at any rate, Jainism is certainly a much more spiritual form of belief. Thus while Hinduism tends towards the belief in Being often even to the exclusion of all Becoming, and Buddhism believes in nothing else but Becoming, Jainism makes room in its belief for both Being and Becoming and views the Universe as it is as a two-fold Reality. It is full of spirits infinite in number, and all these spirits except those who have been perfected are bound by matter which has been attached to them in greater or lesser proportion all through the ages. This bondage is due to their Karmas to which the Jivas (Souls) are chained from eternity. If this were all, however, that the Jainism believed, the faith would not be far removed from a sort of Materialism. But they believe with all their strength that these Jivas, although they are eternally bound, have in them a free-will, and that by means of this they can break these chains of Karma-attracted matter and be completely free and reach spiritual perfection.

The Jainas recognize nine *Tattvas* i.e., principles or categories to which all things could be reduced ultimately. They are behind the totality of all things. These are called (1) Jiva:Souls, (2) Ajiva:non-souls, (3) Ashrava:attracting the matter to oneself by one's Karmas, (4) Bandha:assi-

milating of this matter to oneself and being bound therewith, (5) Samvar: stopping of this inflow, (6) Nirjara:loosening of this matter from one's self, (7) Moksha: perfect freedom, (8) Papa:demerit which keeps one in a backward condition, (9) Punya:merit which helps one's advancement. The last two of these are not accepted usually by the Digambaras as separate ones.

Regarding the first of these i.e., the Jivas, the Jainas say that they are infinite in number and are of all kinds. Perhaps it is in the study of these that we find the special character of Jaina Philosophy, which lies in this that it proceeds alongside of deep and minute scientific observation. Several centuries before Christ, the Jainas recognised life in earth, water, air and even fire. Naturally they did the same to a much larger extent in all vegetation. They classify these souls in five divisions according to the number of organs which are developed in them, and at the top those with five organs are divided into those who have thinking power and those which have not. It is only human beings that have thought-power and who can develop themselves to the point of perfection.

Ajiva is of five kinds of which matter is the lowest. This last exists in the form of atoms which are extremely minute. Then there are space and time and two kinds of ether, one of these being the fulcrum of motion and the other that of rest.

The inter-play and inter-action of these two—Jiva and Ajiva—are due solely to the Karmas of the Jivas, the actions whereby the latter get involved into and bound by matter. The Jains have devoted a great deal of time and thought to the problem of Karma, its nature and power and the way in which one can be free from it. They have classified these Karmas into no less than 148 kinds. So deep has been the psychological analysis of the nature of Karma and so exact have been the calculations concerning the results of these Karmas that one of their own teachers has called their philosophy of Karma a "spiritual arithmetic."

The very realistic and practical character of Jainism can be recognised from this:

that out of the nine categories that it recognises no less than seven relate to the problem of Karma, the way one is bound and the way one can be free from these bonds. While dealing with the question of Jiva and Ajiva, Jainism has tried to be as exact and minute in its investigations and observation as it possibly could in those days, but its supreme interest is neither Science nor Philosophy but Salvation. It is thus primarily a Religion and not a Philosophy as its very name implies.

JAINA ETHICS

It is usually believed by the Western scholars that the doctrine of Karma is one of fatalism. Nothing can be further from the truth. Even amongst the people of India, the Jainas lay perhaps the greatest emphasis on Karma, but the entire tendency of their belief and practice has lain in a direction opposite to Fatalism. One's Karma is meant only to be conquered, and thus Jainism proclaims a dynamic and victorious faith. Its teachers are known by the name Conquerors, and it is this aspect of its teaching which differentiates it from all other religions. Perhaps no religion has, while fully recognising the limitations, weakness and sin of human beings, taught that there is within the soul a power which can make it absolutely free from all these limitations and even perfect to the extent that Jainism has done. The Gospel that it has preached is that man is a Spirit, and as such has in him powers which, if he would only use them, would give him eternal happiness and joy.

Jainism believes that an infinite number of beings have attained perfection in the course of ages in the past and that an infinite number will do so in the future. It thus believes in positive perfection and in the attainment thereof, and in this lies the difference between it and Buddhism. Moreover this is the goal that it lays before every human being, and the means to it are found in the very strict rules of discipline that one is required to go through in order to reach the perfect state. Asceticism plays a very big part in this discipline, and therein lies another peculiarity of Jainism.

Because of its Karmas in the past, the soul is bound or imprisoned in matter, and it is this which makes him go the round of births and deaths in the world. The problem before him is to break the chains of this Karmas or Karma-attracted matter which has clung to him in such a way as to become a part and parcel of his nature. At the same time he should not accumulate any more matter. This two-fold object can be achieved only by complete renunciation of all actions and desires, and to this end Jainism tries to circumscribe the life of its followers in every possible manner, the idea being that the less one has to do with the world the greater the chance for achieving inner freedom. This renunciation of activity etc. has another aspect which is altogether peculiar to Jainism and which gives it an ethical turn. We have seen that Jainism teaches that the whole Universe is full of living beings of a more or less developed kind, and whatever one might do, one cannot help killing these. Even the least act of breathing or movement of the body might kill perhaps thousands of these invisible beings, and one owes a duty to one's own self as well as to them not to do so. Herein lies the basis of the now famous doctrine of *Ahimsa*, non-violence which has been peculiarly emphasised by the Jainas.

Ahimsa, therefore, is the first vow which every Jain had to take. As a matter of fact it is this which differentiates the Jainas from others. They are the strictest vegetarians and the more advanced among them would hesitate even to pluck a leaf from a tree. Their tenderness towards animals and insects of all kinds, including even the beast, is well-known and is sometimes carried to fantastic lengths. The prominence that this doctrine has got now, during the last few years owing to the work of the great Hindu leader Mahatma Gandhi, is due to Jaina influence on him. The second vow is that of truthfulness. The third is non-stealing. The fourth is Brahmacharya i.e., freedom from sexual sin. The fifth is not to have covetousness.

These five are considered the major vows and they are to be practised in different degrees by all who would follow Jainism. For example, the Sadhus are to practise

all these vows as fully as possible. In their case the third vow means that not only are they forbidden to marry but even the touch of woman is sin to them. Regarding the fifth vow, they cannot even touch money or do anything with it. They have no possessions as such, and all that they can keep with them is a few necessary clothes, a few wooden vessels and some books. It might be said of these men and women—there are nuns too—that they live strictly in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ as they are given in the Sermon on the Mount and in his special charge to the Apostles when he sent them out. And they do this without knowing the Sermon on the Mount.

The rule for laymen and laywomen is not so strict. Except for the Sadhus (Monks) and Sadhvis (Nuns), there is no compulsory obligation in regard to what they should do or not do. This means that these Monks and Nuns form the centre of the Jain Church and they represent the religion at its best. The others who are called Shravakas i.e., the auditors form the outer ring, and their duty is to circumscribe their life gradually in all directions until it approximates to that of the Sadhus.

It is not to be inferred from this that Jainism resolves itself only into a Rule of Conduct. There is worship and devotion of an intense kind which crowns this Rule and it is obligatory upon every one to engage in it. It is true this worship is not theistic, but it is offered to the perfected Beings mentioned above, and its chief value is subjective, because according to the Jainas these Beings have no more any interest in the world. In addition to this there is a sort of daily confession which the more advanced among them make, and the tendency of all this is to make the monks and the Laity truly moral and religious. It was not without reason, therefore, that the Jainas were called by discerning Europeans, when they came to know these people for the first time, the Quakers of India. Besides, the Jaina Rule of Conduct, extremely strict as it is, has been tempered with a spirit of rare charity and benevolence not only towards all human beings but towards all creatures whatsoever. The Spirit of Ahimsa, which

is such a peculiar feature of Indian life and civilisation, a spirit which has transfused gentleness and tenderness not only in all human relations but even in those towards the animal world, is due to the pervasive influence of Jainism.

ORGANISATION OF THE JAINA CHURCH

It is a fact worthy of notice that while Buddhism and Jainism were both non-Vedic faiths and as such opposed to Brahminism, the former disappeared from the land altogether whereas the latter continued to live, in spite of the fact that its following was never so large as that of Buddhism at one time. There are various causes attributed to this difference between the two faiths, and one of them is said by some of the Western scholars to be the fact that in Jainism the Laity has a bigger position given to it than in Buddhism. The Jainas recognise in their Samgha (this is the same word that the Buddhists use and it is a term corresponding to the term Church in English) four orders viz., Sadhus, Sadhvis, Shravakas, and Shravikas. Of these the first two have the work of ministering to the religious needs of the entire community in their hands, while the latter two have to do with everything else connected with the ministry. The monks can have no possessions and even the houses they live in and their maintenance etc., all these things lie in charge of the Shravakas. Owing to this, while the former exercise religious power and influence over the Laity, a power which is rarely abused owing to the serious limitations under which they have to live, the Laity also exercise a kind of power over the Sadhus. Because of this, Sadhus or Sadhvis, without being over-dependant upon the Laity, have to be very careful lest they should fail in their duties or in carrying out the Rule of Conduct. Any notable failure is sufficient for the Laity to remove such a man or woman from the Order. The result of this has been the keeping of the monks and nuns on a high level of character, and mutual harmony and concord prevail between both the religious Orders and the Laity. The present writer has had personal experience of various religious Bodies and Churches, and he has known none in which the religious minis-

ters are leading their life on a higher level of personal purity and religious service of the community than these monks and nuns among the Jainas.

Besides, the life of these men and women belonging to the religious Orders is so organised that it keeps them busy every day of their life in their work of teaching religion. Except for the four months of the rainy season, they have to keep moving from place to place so that their love for any one place and its people may not grow too much and that other places also might have the advantage of their teaching. The Shravakas and Shravikas gather together everyday in places where the Sadhus, or in their absence the Sadhvis, preach their daily sermon. It is Jainism alone which has given the liberty to its women to perform this preaching ministry.

ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE

The moral and spiritual greatness of Jainism is reflected in its many monuments of art that are found scattered all over India. Although Jainism has practically been extinct in the lower parts of South India, there are remains there of temples which must have been at one time some of the glories of sculpture and architecture.

Even to-day some of the finest architecture to be found all over India is in the Jaina temples on Mt. Abu, which in their own way are said to be as beautiful as the great Taj Mahal and which rightly evoke the admiration of every observer. There are similar temples all over India built on hills and mountains within easy reach of the people, but though all of them have a beauty of their own, none of these have the exquisite grace that the Abu temples have. As early as 1829, Colonel James Todd in his "Annals of Rajasthan," which, by the bye, is a rare chronicle of Rajput heroism and nobility worthy to be placed by the side of the stories of the best heroism of the Greeks, writes, among other things, of one of these monuments as follows:—

"One of the best preserved monumental remains in India is a column most elaborately sculptured, full 70 feet in height, dedicated to Parshvanath in Chittoor. The noblest remains of sacred architecture, not in Mewar only, but throughout Western India, are Buddhist or Jaina and the many ancient cities where this religion was fostered have inscriptions which evince their prosperity in these countries with whose history their own is interwoven."

THE FOUNDATION OF HINDU CULTURE

By G. Guru Dutt

[Culture implies perfecting of human personality: civilisation, perfecting of human instruments. The social and religious aspirations of the Hindu race always had the former as the impelling motive behind, even to the neglect of the latter accomplishment, in which the West has excelled. This, however, has saved the soul of India. The author of this paper brings to our attention these points with scholarly ability. Mr. Guru Dutt is a distinguished officer of Mysore Civil Service and a keen student of religion.]

I

ALL of us have a working idea of what culture signifies and that will do to start with. If, however, a definition is called for, it would be easier for us to say what it is not rather than what it is. Of late it has

become usual to speak of culture and civilisation as if they were synonymous. As an instance in point, I might cite a passage from Dr. Perry's *The Growth of Civilisation*. This is how he commences one of his chapters: "The world is tenanted by people in

various stages of culture. At one end of the scale are societies such as our own, with all the resources of civilisation, with innumerable means of overcoming time and space, and of living a life of infinite complexity. At the other end of the scale are those that have made practically no progress in the arts and crafts, who still wander about seeking their food where they may get it." Reading such a book one gets an idea that culture is a thing which started from the flint axe, developed into the copper chisel and finally into the elaborate machinery of the present day. We seem to be reading not so much of man's highest aspirations, of his yearning for God and for his fellow man, but rather of his greed for tin and copper, for coal and iron, and for silver and gold and petroleum. It is the history of these great gods which is studied as the history of civilisation and that of culture: how from small and non-existent beginnings these gods have come to be the mighty beings that they are to-day, how they have favoured their worshipper, man, and how both have gone on mutually augmenting and profiting each other through the long ages—a strange parody of the interdependence of gods and men spoken of in the Bhagavad-gita III:11. The course of man's life on this planet thus seems to bear some analogy to a protracted sacrificial session—a Dirghasatra. What is suggested is the same age-old question which we already find in the Rigveda (X: x: 9), "To which god shall we offer oblation?" (*Kasmai devaya havisha vidhema?*) To many in the modern age all the activities of man appear to be nothing more

than oblations offered on the altar of civilisation and the State.¹

The traditional culture of India, however, is in marked contrast to this. It has been essentially individualistic, that is to say, the embodied personality of man has been the nucleus round which everything else has ranged itself. This embodied personality has been called Purusha, which means he who resides in the city called the body: *Puri sayah*. The body has been called the city with nine gates (Navadvāra), the gates being the outlets of the senses. This 'person' has been the subject of culture and not the citizen in the political sense. The Purusha was considered potentially Divine and the Supreme Person or Purushottama, also considered embodied, was the recipient of all Yajnas or sacrifices. In the words of the Bhagvadgita (VIII:4): "That which underlies all the gods is Purusha and I alone (i.e., the Supreme Lord) am he who underlies all sacrifices here in this body." The culture of the individual consisted in realising the goal or the fourfold objective of this Purusha, i.e., Purushārtha. In this four-fold scheme of obligation, acquisition, enjoyment and final emancipation, Dharma or social and ethical obligation is given primacy in the interest of the embodied person himself, a portion of whose personality would be starved and stunted but for this. Besides Dharma, the other objectives too have their claims upon

¹ An Author exclaims: "The culture of the individual! What is that but the images and shadows of happenings in mighty States? The very words you utter are sparks smitten from the hard anvil of civilisation, and there has been no civilisation apart from the highly organised State."

the attention of man. The individual is not considered as an oblation to an all-devouring society or organised State in the political sense, to be sacrificed for the sake of the greater disembodied being. On the other hand, social obligation is placed on a par with man's other natural and individual aspirations, namely, with Artha or desire for wealth and domination, Kama or craving for the enjoyment of the senses and Moksha or his deep-seated aspiration for ultimate freedom from all bonds. All these four are sometimes loosely brought together under the term Dharma. So Dharma is the most comprehensive term under which all the components of Indian culture could be gathered together. The word Dharma is explained as that by which man is borne up: *Dharyate iti dharmah*. It is that which supports and bears up man's personality for the full realisation of the Purusharthas. On the contrary anything which breaks up a man's personality, and thwarts his realisation of all the Purusharthas is not Dharma. Dharma, therefore, is not considered as a social and ethical norm or standard, but rather as something which is personal and subtle. Hence the doctrine of Svadharma or congenial Dharma has been propounded in the Gita.

Dharma considered as equivalent to the four Purusharthas has often been pictured in our mythology as a cow with four legs. Each leg is as important as any other and any mutilation would affect the body as a whole. That Age of man is true in which the cow moves about happily with all its legs intact. It is called the Satyayuga. Any historical age is not meant by this, but rather it

refers to the spiritual state of the individual. Various stages of mutilation of the Dharma have been described in the Puranas, until the miserable cow has come to hobble along on only one leg. It does not matter what that leg is: be it Dharma itself in the restricted sense of morality, or Moksha in the sense of a perverted seeking of individual freedom at the cost of all else, or the seeking of Artha and Kama by themselves divorced from their companions. It would appear as if, now for the large majority of people in the world, 'Artha' is the only Purushartha. Economics and politics (Arthasastra) are the only sciences which count. Even then it is not the individual Purusha that matters, but some huge disembodied being like Society or the State, capable of greed and pride collectively, but impervious to weal and woe. Culture has thus become equated with civilisation.

II

Purushartha was to be realised by one grand means and that was called Yajna or sacrifice. With the very different modes of thinking into which we have worked ourselves in the present day, it would be difficult indeed for us to realise what this Yajna meant to the ancient world. The conception was not peculiar to India alone. It was universal. It was shared by the Egyptians and the Babylonians no less than by the Chinese and the aboriginal inhabitants of the two Americas. At a time when communications were so extremely difficult, this identity of conception appears nothing short of a miracle. Yet it is doubtful whether the full import of this miracle has

been appreciated by the modern world. The chief cause for this lack of appreciation appears to be the want of respect and reverence for conceptions alien to their own, which characterises so-called civilised peoples of the present day, who are only too inclined to treat as primitive superstition whatever they do not understand. Yajna is not studied as if it were a reality but as if it were an exploded delusion. The basic and fundamental idea underlying Yajna is given in the Bhagavadgita III:14 and 15. In a general way many of us may not seriously object to that view. But if pressed hard we would find it difficult, indeed, to accept literally the truth of the link, from Yajna arises rain. Yet in the literal acceptance of this is centred the whole concept of Yajna.

To the Vedic worshippers sacrifice was a science—the science of Yajna. Together, the three Vedas were called the threefold science or Trayividya. The experiences described therein were real in the most fundamental sense, and not merely in the fanciful and poetic. Perhaps no people in history have been so truthful as these ancient Aryans; and what they have left on record has to be taken seriously and not as the superstitious delusions of an unscientific age. This innate truthfulness has been the most characteristic feature of Indian culture through the ages. As is said in the Mahabharata: Truth alone prevails and not falsehood: *Satyam eva jayate nanritam*. Through the ages the prayer has gone forth: From the unreal lead me on to the real: *Asato ma sad gamaya*. One of the highest praises bestowed upon the is in the Veda is that they are

Satya, true, truthful, trustworthy. Other words applied to the gods as truthful beings are:—*adrogha* which means literally not deceiving. *Adroghavak* means he whose word is never broken. Thus Indra is said to have been praised by the Pitris as 'reaching the enemy, overcoming him, standing on the summit, true of speech, most powerful in thought'. (Rigveda vi.22.2) *Droghavak* on the contrary is used for deceitful men. Thus Vasishta, the great Vedic Rishi, exclaims: "If I had worshipped false gods, or if I had believed in the gods vainly—but why art thou angry with us O Jatavedas?—may liars go to utter destruction." (Ib. vii.104, 14). Such was their regard for truth; and truth for them was not merely an intellectual proposition like the statement that two and two make four, or that the sun rises in the east, but something fundamental, the very backbone and support of existence—physical as well as psychological. Thus we have the Mantra *Satyena uttabhita bhumi* — this earth is propped up by truth.²

² The Satapatha Brahmana II.2.2.49, has: "Whosoever speaks the truth, makes the fire on his own altar blaze up, as if he poured butter into the lighted fire. His own light grows larger and larger and from tomorrow to tomorrow he becomes better. But whosoever speaks untruth, he quenches the fire on his altar, as if he poured water in'to the lighted fire; his own light grows smaller and smaller and from tomorrow to tomorrow he becomes more wicked. Let man therefore speak the truth only." There is also the following story told in the same Brahmana: "His kinsman said to Aruna Aupavesi: 'Thou art advanced in years, establish thou the sacrificial fires.' He replied: 'Thereby you tell me henceforth to keep silence. For he who has established the fires must not speak an untruth.' To that extent the service of the sacrificial fires consists in truth."

So much for truth or Satya. But there is another conception in the Veda which is most frequently coupled with Satya, and that is Rita. It is twin with Satya. Thus we find in the Rigveda, x.12.39, "Out of arduous Tapas were born Satya and Rita." The word Rita is etymologically identical with the English word 'right'. In the Veda it stands for moral law as well as the Natural order. Its function is cosmic as well as psychic. In fact it is the earliest counterpart of the word Dharma. Rita is something more than truth, as it combines in itself the idea of righteousness also. The word Rita is stated to be phonetically identical with the Zoroastrian concept of Asa, which also means truth and right. The word has close affinities with the Chinese concept of Tao—the right way or the order of the Universe. In the words of Macdonell: "It would be in the spirit of all three religions to say: Asa, or Rita,³ or Tao is the basis of religion." We will now examine the Vedic concept of Rita with greater attention.

³ Dr. Carpenter writes: "Here is that which exists before heaven and earth; they are born of it and even in it, and its domain is the wide space. From it, likewise, the gods proceed; and the lofty pair, Mitra and Varuna, with Aditi and her train, are its protectors. But through the mystical identity of the order of Nature and the order of the sacrifice, the culture—whether on earth or in heaven—is also its sphere. Agni, the sacrificial fire, the dear house priest, is Rita-born, and by its aid carried the offerings to heaven. Such also is the sacred drink, the Soma which is borne in the Rita's car and follows its ways. And the heavenly sacrificers, the fathers in the radiant world above, have grown according to the Rita, for they know and faithfully obey the law. Thus it becomes the supreme expression of morality

Rita⁴ is seen to be an eminently practical conception. It is a thing which can be attained, and the means for its attainment is called Yajna. By this means the man enters into Rita, and the Rita enters into man. What is needed is not the understanding of Rita in the intellectual sense, but the practising of it. Then man is at home in the universe; the earth and heaven become his parents; the winds and rain show their kinship; and he sees the identity of the light that is in man and the light that is in the sun. In the words of the Rigveda (i.14.6.6), "The winds blow sweetness to the sacrificer and the rivers flow sweetness." Let us not forget the untranslatable significance of the verb 'ritayate' formed out of the word Rita. Yajna was the cult or cultus and Rita was the culture,

and is practically equivalent with Satya, true (literally that which is) or good. Heaven and Earth are Satya, Veracious; they can be trusted; they are Ritavan, faithful to the path steadiest in the order. Not less so is the godly man; he too, is Ritavan, the same word being used to denote divine holiness and human piety. And thus the life of gods and men, the order of Nature, the ritual of worship and daily duty were all bound together in one principle."

'In the following symbolic word Rigveda (IV.3.2 & 3.10) describes the concept: "Many are the waters of Rita: the adoration of Rita destroys iniquities; the intelligent and brilliant praise of Rita has opened the deaf (ears) of man. Many are the sustaining and stable and delightful forms of the embodied Rita; by Rita are (the pious) expectant of food; by Rita have the kine entered into the sacrifice. The worshipper subjecting Rita verily enjoys Rita: the strength of Rita is (developed) with speed, and is desirous of (possessing) water: to Rita belong the wide and profound heaven and earth: supreme milch kine, they yield their milk to Rita."

the realisation of it. This Rita was perceived not by itself in the abstract, but in the shape of the several gods or Devas. Shall we call them the embodiments of culture? These gods with Indra at their head were no other than the faculties of man through which his consciousness shines forth. The word Deva means shining, and the word Indriya which means 'derived from Indra' stands for man's senses. We should note particularly that the sacredness and reverence with which the senses were treated. The senses had not yet been contaminated with the touch of sin by the Asuras, as for example is to be seen in the word 'sensual'. The pristine glory of the senses had not yet been clouded. They were perceived as the Kalas or digits of the Supreme Purusha. Not merely were the faculties Deva (divine) but what they perceived was also Deva. Thus in the Prasna Upanishad the disciple Bhargava Vaidarbhi asks the Rishi Pippalada: "Revered Sir, how many are the gods who support the creatures? How many of them manifest it? and who again is the greatest of them?" The sage replies that Akasa is 'that god, and Vayu and Agni and Apas and Prithivi and also speech, mind, the eye and the ear; and that the central principle of life, Prana, is the greatest of them all. He goes on to illustrate it by a parable and eulogises it as follows: "He burns as fire; he is the sun; he is the cloud; he is Indra; he is the wind. This bright one is (verily) earth, Matter, what is and what is not and also what is immortal." (Pr. Up. ii:5).

What is noteworthy here is the blending of the perceiver and the per-

ceived. These gods are neither physical like the cloud and fire nor do they consist wholly in man's imagination, but are a reality of a subtle and new order which might be truly called metaphysical or Sukshma. In worshipping them man kept closest to Nature. Take for example fire or Agni. He was worshipped in the physical fire; yet he was not different from the fire that is within man, that digests his food and assimilates it: Jatharagni; he was not different from the fire that digests facts of experience and results in understanding: Jatavedas (who understands all that exists); he was not different from the fire of devotion and piety: Sraddha; finally it was Agni who was the worshipper as well as the worshipped. He was conceived as a person, yet the conception was not wholly anthropomorphic. He was the medium through which all the other gods were propitiated: thus he was a sort of common denominator for all the gods. He possesses the characteristics of practically every god and can in no sense be deemed an individual like a human being. What he was perceived as, and what was expected from him, could be better grasped from the very first 'Sukta' of the Rigveda.⁵

"I magnify Agni the domestic priest, the divine ministrant of the sacrifice, the invoker, the best bestower of treasure. Agni is to be magnified by past and present seers, may he conduct the gods here. Through Agni may one obtain wealth day by day (and) prosperity, glorious (and) most abounding in heroes. O Agni, the worship and sacrifice thou encompassst on every side, that same goes to the gods. May Agni the invoker, of wise intelligence, the true, of most brilliant fame, the god come with the gods. Just what good thou. O Agni, wilt thou do for the worshipper,

(Footnote continued on next page.)

The objectives of the Vedic culture are tangible and full-blooded. They are neither quietistic nor ascetic. There is a healthy joy in life, and there is the spirit of adventure. It might be thought that all this was compensated for by the Upanishads. In fact it has been suggested that the Upanishads represent a sort of reac-

tion against the Vedas. But this is more apparent than real. Any number of passages could be quoted from the Upanishads to show that they are the natural completion of the teaching that exists in the Samhita proper. They are the fruits of the same tree of which the Samhita and Brahmana are the trunk and branches.⁶

(To be concluded in the next issue.)

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Philosophy of Advaita, with special reference to Bharatitirtha Vidyaranya, by T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D. Published by Luzac & Co., 46, Russell St., London W.C. 1. Pages XVI+284. Introduction, Bibliography, Glossary, Index. Price Rs. 5 or 7sh. 6d. Copies can be had of G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras, also.

'Advaita' is a transcendental experience and a philosophic conclusion. Brahman, the Supreme Soul, alone is real; world is an illusion; Jiva, the individual soul, is none but Brahman. This is the core of Advaita. Advaita cannot degenerate into popular superstition, because it is profound philosophy; it should not be dragged down to the level of dry-as-dust speculation or a mere hobby of the study closet, because its ethical and religious implications are sublime and far-reaching. The identity proposition of Advaita holds a supreme solution for human problems, and it is the noblest statement of the highest destiny of man. Sages and Godmen who realised this truth are the beacon lights on the flounder-

ing path of humanity. Mankind as a whole, however, is only on the road to the realisation of its influence in shaping its working values and ethical ends. But that is being widely recognised in the march of time.

This Advaitic axiom of unity enunciated in the Upanishads and corroborated by the experiences of great mystics, is taught through a systematic philosophy that has an evolution of about twenty-five centuries. The vast literature on the subject amply shows that the Advaita philosophy has been a very provocative one. It interacted with other systems that grew along with it, and sometimes adopted the technique, or appropriated some of their tenets, or modified some of its own concepts in their light, without prejudice to the central doctrine, as is clearly shown by its history from the intuitional gleams of the Upanishads through the Brahmasutras and Sankara's exposition thereof to the voluminous writings of Vachaspati, Suresvara, Sarvajnatman, Harsha, Chit-

that (purpose) of thee (comes) true, O Angiras. To thee, O Agni, day by day, O illuminer of gloom, we come with thought bringing homage; (to thee) ruling over sacrifices, the shining guardian of order (Rita), growing in thine own house. So, O Agni, be easy of access to us, as a father to his son: abide with us for our well-being."—Macdonell's translation.

⁶The following citation from the Taittiriya Upanishad bears this out: "May He, the Supreme among all Vedas, the One of Universal form, born of the Immortal Vedas, Indra, enliven me with intelligence. Of the Immortal, O God, may I be the possessor. May my body be fit; may my tongue be sweet; with ears much may I hear. The sheath of Brahman art Thou, enveloped by intelligence; may Thou protect what I have heard." (T. Up. iv).

sukha, Krishnananda, Vidyaranya, Appayya and others. The pre-Sankara and Sankara periods of Advaita have been canvassed by Deussen, Radhakrishnan and other reputed scholars, who have laid the modern world under deep obligation by offering their monumental volumes. The post-Sankara period is fresh ground, where no attempt had been made to meet the demands of the modern readers.

Dr. Mahadevan has now traversed this period by his timely and competent volume, which may be considered a supplement to the works of the previous scholars. Of course it is hardly possible to condense into a single volume the contents of scores of highly intellectual volumes produced by vastly erudite and virile philosophic thinkers of this period, interpreting, defending, criticising and co-ordinating the subtle views and novel concepts that have been introduced into the system. The present author has therefore generally based his book on the three well-known works belonging to this period, all of which he attributes to Bharatitirtha-Vidyaranya. This fact does not narrowly limit the book; for it gives a rapid survey of Advaita philosophy "with great clarity and penetration." In Sanskrit and Provincial languages there are Prakaranas or manuals of the type of Panchadasi, Vicharasagara and Tattvanusandhana which are popular for the well-organised account they give of the tenets of Advaita as they are explained in the Vadagranthas (critical and dialectical works). In English such works are almost nil. A most intelligently planned work as the present volume is, it forms, therefore, an excellent contribution to the subject.

Dr. Mahadevan's *The Philosophy of Advaita* is conveniently divided into ten chapters forming a comprehensive and co-ordinated whole. In a brief introduction, the historical problem connected with Vidyaranya is discussed. Dr. Mahadevan cuts the Gordian knot by taking Vidyaranya to be a surname of two persons Bharatitirtha and Madhavacharya. The view certainly has its strong points. The authorship of these works still presents a problem. If Anandajana has a commentary on Drig-drisya, and if this Anandajana is the same Anandagiri who lived in the 12th century, how can one attribute that

work to Bharatitirtha? Of course there are stronger evidences of other commentators for attributing it to him, but this point of having written a commentary by Anandajana deserves examination. As to the Panchadasi, XV.22 of the book, which refers to Ch. XI as 'adya', shows that the last five chapters are a separate unit called 'Brahmananda.' The name Panchadasi, since it has no reference to the contents of the book, can be one given to a collected work like Panchastavi of the Sri Vidya cult, and hence the view of Nischaladas Achyutaraya Modak and others deserves deference at least. Dr. Mahadevan states that Appayya must have known more about Bharatitirtha than the later Nischaladas; true, but all the references in the Siddhantalessa are to the sub-titles and not to Panchadasi as a single work. This lends colour to the view of combined authorship. The controversy still appears to be an open one. The question is argued in a paper read at the Oriental Conference held last year at Trivandrum. (*Vide* Annals of the Bhandarkar Research Institute. Vol. XIX, p. 289 sqq.) Whatever that be, the selection made is one of the best to present the post-Sankara period of Advaita.

In the opening chapter of the book under notice, the reader is taken "to the portal to Philosophy." Here the Hindu theory of knowledge, from the Advaitic view-point is discussed lucidly and concisely with critical reference to the views of parallel systems. The next chapter dealing with truth and error (Prana and Aprana) is elaborate and masterly. The Advaitic definition of truth being an improvement upon several other definitions, it has been necessitated to glance the other views to give perspicuity to the Advaitin's own view. In discussing the various erroneous cognitions the author has rightly pushed his enquiry beyond the data supplied by the three chosen works and assembled together facts from other sources in a skilful and orderly way that would evoke the admiration and gratitude of a general reader of Advaita in English. After preparing the ground by a study of the Prama and Prama, the reader is conducted to the two brilliant chapters that succeed, dealing with the Prameya—"Reality as existence" and "Reality as bliss." The un-

usual discrimination and clear analysis which are in evidence in these chapters are specially noteworthy. The next five chapters of the book have the titles "The witness self", "Isvara and Jiva", "Maya", "Path of perfection" and "Release", respectively in logical succession. Panchadasi has been largely exploited under these headings, because that undoubtedly is a standard work treating of those topics. The ninth chapter dealing with the discipline is too brief, especially after the Dhyana-dipa. The same comparative outlook and careful research mark all these chapters. Parallel thoughts from Western writers are cited where they could throw some additional light on the interpretation, or merely to compare notes. There is no attempt to evaluate the thought discussed, and an objective standard is kept up, which makes the work thoroughly scientific and reliable. One can readily agree that the work on the whole offers a valuable background to those who wish to grasp the major problems of Advaita through an English book, owing to their inability to pass the language bridge to be enlightened from the source books themselves, which are in technical Sanskrit.

The Advaita Philosophy has won for the author his Doctorate. That undoubtedly sets off the merits of the work. Doctorate theses are often works by scholars designed for scholars. Works written with the technical skill of the expert to be approved and appreciated by other veteran scholars may be too high for the common reader, unless the authors of such works take special care to rewrite them for them. The present work is generally free from such inaccessibility. Dr. Mahadevan writes clearly and precisely, and not pedantically. However, we are constrained to say that the general use of his book would have been much more facilitated if he had amplified certain places a little more. For instance, an uninitiated reader could not make out much from the Mimamsa methodology illustrated on pages 239 & 240, because it is too condensed and strewn with unexplained Sanskrit words. Terms like "object-causal-correlate" and "adjunct-conditioned" are hard on the plain man. Of course Vedantic dialectics is not for one who is innocent of the princi-

ples of Mimamsa and Nyaya. But it is depressing to note that a glossary that scrupulously takes note of "Rama", "Vedanta" and "Dhyana" would not mind the technical Sadhakatva, Nirgunopasana, Pudgalastikaya and others which are sure to exasperate a foreign reader who does not happen to be an Orientalist.

The book under review is written with scholarly accuracy in fact and interpretation. However, it would have gained more in perfection if the following slight defects were provided against by greater vigilance in the revision of proofs. Foot notes Nos. 23, page 223; 11, page 257; 12, page 218 and 37, page 195 (*vide* Kaivalya Up. 1:14 referred to in Panchadasi, XI:73), all give incorrect references. If the reference given in foot note No. 17, page 243 is correct, the translation made in the body of the book is wrong; for Akrita and Krita according to Sankara stand for what is 'non-produced' (eternal) and 'produced' (ephemeral) respectively. The misprint on page 131, l. 27 is a very venial oversight. The Maitrayani Sakha referred to on page 249 is, more definitely, the Upanishad of that name. The presence of a macron on the first 'a' of Jadunath (p. 31 and 32) and the absence of the same over the last 'a' of the fem. word Simsapa (p. 128 and 276) give wrong transliterations. Trisavana has cerebral 'n' (p. 234). The author has obliged the readers by properly hyphenating long Sanskrit words; but the addition and subtraction of hyphens to the same word is not graceful (*cf.* page 197, l. 25 and l. 36 and p. 207, l. 7). "The reasonable punctuation with etc.," says H. W. Fowler, "is to put a comma before it when more than one term has preceded, but not when one term only has preceded" (*Modern English Usage* p. 151), as on p. 194, l. 26; p. 215, l. 8, etc.; but this decent rule is overlooked in many places (*e.g.*, p. 29, l. 12; p. 122, l. 9; 125, l. 33; p. 132, l. 1, 18, 37; p. 218, l. 4; p. 236, l. 5; p. 241, l. 13; p. 243, l. 33; p. 254, l. 25, etc.). To dress the same word with italics sometimes and sometimes not, without any reason, is rather unsightly (*e.g.* 'viz.' on p. 234, l. 33 and p. 235, l. 3). But for these defects the book is excellently printed; and it is attractively got up also. We offer our hearty felicitations to

the author for having produced such a serviceable book.

Matsyavata: (*The masterpiece of Indian art*). By M. S. Sarma. *The Temple of Indian Art*, 306, High Road, Triplicane. Aqua tint. Original etching. Size 13"×9". Price Rs. 10.

This picture is an artistic conception of the age when the entire earth was submerged under water. It depicts Vishnu in His incarnation as fish, rising above the cosmic waters with the Vedas in his arms, represented as four children. Symbolically it seeks to show how cosmic beauty, cosmic truth, cosmic power and cosmic life of the world are centred in Vishnu-matsya, even as the light, heat and energy which pervade the universe are centred in the sun.

The central idea for which the picture stands is 'Santi', peace. Without any elaborate technique and artificial colour scheme, the artist has remarkably succeeded in suggesting this idea. An expression of calm repose and austere beauty is written large in its simple yet attractive design. One cannot help looking at it without feeling that one is face to face with true art.

Lingadharanachandrika: By Nandikeshvara. Edited and published with English translation and notes by M. R. Sakhare, M.A., T.D. (Cantab), 134, Thalakwadi, Belgaum. Pp. 326. Price Rs. 5 (Sanskrit).

The book under review is one of the authoritative texts of the Lingayat Sect of Hindus. It purports to be only the second part of the whole work undertaken

by the Editor, the first part being an introduction dealing exhaustively with the history and philosophy of the Lingayats, which is yet to see the light of day. Publications of this sort are always welcome as they give an insight into the works of scholarly minds brought up in and nourished by sectarian traditions and culture. Many of the authoritative works on the Lingayat system are in Kannada, and are not available for comparative study and scrutiny to the ordinary scholar. And mostly these few are also from the pens of saints and not from scholars and intellectuals. The Sanskrit works belonging to this school are very few. The publisher has done a valuable service to the Sanskrit-knowing world as well as to the English-knowing public by this timely publication of this rare work. The author purports to derive all the important doctrines of the system from the Smritis and Srutis themselves. All Hindu sects must indeed entrench themselves behind the sanctity of the Vedic traditions, though at first they may be dissenting sects full of contempt for the Vedic traditions. It shows the all-comprehensive nature of the spiritual lore of the Hindus which can complacently afford to take back into its fold all dissenting sects. It was not long ago we had occasions to review in our columns the commentary on the Brahma-sutras from the Lingayat standpoint. The volume under the present review goes further ahead and comments upon many passages in the Vedas and Upanishads themselves in the light of the same tradition.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Unpublished Sayings of Swami Vivekananda

Mme. Lizelle Reymond, who is preparing a biography of Sister Nivedita, has been studying the correspondence of the Sister with some of her friends. She sent us the four following sayings of Swami Vivekananda, which Sister Nivedita quoted in letters.

To Nivedita, after she had interviewed him for the "Prabuddha Bharata" (11th

March 1899): "I have been thinking for days about that line of least resistance, and it's a bare fallacy! It is a comparative thing. As for me, I am never going to think of it again. The history of the world is the history of a few earnest men, and when one man is in earnest the world must just come to his feet. I am *not* going to water down my ideals. I am going to dictate terms."

On the same occasion: "We have not seen humanity yet—and when that era dawns there will be no line of least resistance, for *everyone* will be free to do good."

In a letter written a few days after the Swami's death, she recalls how he used to say: "When a great man has prepared his workers, he must go to another place, for he cannot make them free in his own presence!"

On a later occasion she writes that Swami Vivekananda once said of his own Master: "He would not imagine himself the teacher of anyone. He was like a man playing with balls of many colours, and leaving it to others to select which they would for themselves."

Celebration of the Holy Mother's Birthday Tribute of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu.

The eighty-sixth birth-day anniversary of Sri Sri Saradamani Devi was celebrated with usual enthusiasm at the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, on the 13th and the 15th of December. The function consisted of elaborate divine service, Vedic chant, Homa, special offering, music and distribution of consecrated food among devotees. The ladies' meeting specially convened for the purpose, had the distinction of being presided over by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. In the course of her impressive and inspiring address she said: "The centenary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated last year when men and women of all countries and of all faiths came and participated in the celebrations, because they found in him the personification of their spiritual ideals. Two American women devotees of Sri Ramakrishna gave princely donations for the construction of a beautiful temple of Sri Ramakrishna at Belur, Calcutta. Sri Ramakrishna passed through all phases of spiritual Sadhana and his life was an ordeal of fire.

"Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, illiterate though he was, emancipated millions of people, thereby proving the futility of mere learning. Mere learning is not enough. What counts is the spirit, the soul in man to realise God. Ramakrishna, during the period of his great sacrifice trying to realise himself, never forgot that man by himself or woman by herself, cannot become great, cannot become a complete ideal of humanity, unless the two together be-

come one spirit, one prayer, one endeavour and one attainment, making a perfect ideal of humanity.

"Ramakrishna said to his wife 'You cannot have what other women have, for I have to be a great man, father of humanity and you must be mother.' Very few women would have had the courage to say 'yes'. When she met her husband she was a little Bengali girl in red-bordered sari and with *kumkum* on her forehead and with her youthful ambition of wifehood and motherhood. Unlike ordinary women, she said: 'I will learn from you what you want me to become. I will learn wisdom.' And he said, 'You cannot be just a mother of children born of your flesh, but a mother of children born of the Spirit.'

"Now you know how she learnt and how it must have been difficult to lead that lonely life. She had all the feminine qualities of sweetness and modesty. She did the cooking for the husband and attended to his needs.

"When we have read all the books in the world, when we have passed all the examination, and taken all the degrees, we find that knowledge is of no value unless it becomes love and service. Cleverness and intelligence are of no use unless they are transmuted into love. This is the thing that Mahatmaji to-day stands for. He is the nearest approach to Sri Ramakrishna, essentially the same in spirit, with abounding love and an unquenchable thirst to serve all.

"This spirit of service to humanity was in greater evidence during the period of Sri Saradamani's widowhood than when she shared the joys and sorrows of her husband. She felt she had a mission to fulfill. She became Shakti and gathered round her more and more men and women. Ramakrishna left her to be his living gospel. By sheer beauty of spirit and force of courage she made men revere her. Every woman has to be in herself a gospel of love and service. Every widow has to take lessons from her who transmuted every tear into a pearl of love and service, and instead of wasting her life in endless sorrow should realise her message.

"We have millions of our widows in our country and they all wail and mourn over their husbands' death. Now Saradamani

Devi's life and example is a lesson to all our women. She felt that she had a legacy from her husband for which she should live. No man becomes great by himself unless the woman on whom he depends has an element of greatness. Many great men have had their progress arrested by their foolish wives. Whether young or old, happy or unhappy, married or unmarried, let us take Sri Saradamani Devi as our guiding star and work in her spirit. Her example will never grow old-fashioned. It will live through all ages according to the needs of the times, essentially the same at core, because she lived for a great ideal, a noble ideal.

"Let us, today, in honouring the memory of a great and simple lady, try to make our lives accord with hers. The Ramakrishna Mission has spread far and wide even to distant California where men and women come to hear Ramakrishna's gospel and honour his memory, because great men have no race, no country. They are for the world and for all time, and it is up to us to show to the world that we are the inheritors of the great heritage left by persons like Ramakrishna and Saradamani Devi."

Swami Siddheswarananda at Geneva

We extract below a few paragraphs from a letter received from Europe, mentioning about the Swami's activities during a short sojourn at Geneva.

"Recently we had the great privilege of having Swami Siddheswarananda with us in Geneva for about one month. There had been insistent demand for another visit from him by all those who had met him here in the Spring and by many others who had not had the opportunity. It becomes increasingly difficult for him, however, to absent himself from Paris for any length of time, owing to the many urgent demands on his time by a large number of people in Paris. We were therefore particularly grateful for the effort he made to give us one whole month.

After the many talks which he had given during his last visit, and a number of lectures which I gave myself in order to prepare people to receive and understand his teaching, we thought the best use he could make of his time would be to

meet very small groups and individuals with whom we could go much deeper into the subject than would be possible with a large audience. Most of his time was accordingly devoted to such interviews and small classes, which, I am glad to report, were highly appreciated. Many people who had the benefit of such talks told me afterwards that they had found there a real turning-point in their life.

It was impossible however to resist the call for larger group-meetings, of which we held half a dozen with an attendance which we managed to keep down to about 35. Some were devoted to the technique of meditation; others for religious and metaphysical subjects such as the 'sublimation of emotions', 'Christ, the idea of Sacrifice', etc. Some collective meditations were also given by the Swami to a select few, and they proved a very great help. Two classes were devoted to Questions and Answers. The audience, which was about equally divided between men and women, included the heads of several important religious communities in Geneva, University professors, doctors, psychoanalysts, etc. While the Swami was here, he also led the regular weekly meeting of a small group of students of Vedanta. He also gave a few devotees the opportunity of being with him during his own morning meditation, an opportunity which was deeply appreciated. Several times he had to accept invitations to private houses where important groups of people had been asked to meet him, and where he spoke on various topics. One whole afternoon was devoted to a conversation with some exponents of Western philosophy, when an attempt was made to compare the meanings, associations and implications of many philosophical terms, expressions and concepts in the East and in the West.

.... While the Swami was here, he and I were invited as guests to the annual gathering of Swiss intellectuals which takes place in the Castle of Oron, and lasts one week. We were the only two guests, among a group of about 100 political leaders, University professors, clergymen, educators, authors, essayists, journalists, doctors, psychoanalysts, etc., under the chairmanship of Professor Henri L. Mieville, the famous philosopher. The topic chosen for

discussion this year was Tolerance, in its religious, philosophical, political, educational and juridical aspects. The Swami spoke once on the educational problems raised in connection with tolerance and his remarks were listened to with very great attention. You will be interested to know that during that whole week of close discussion, and life in common, only one book was opened and read from, and that was Swami Vivckananda's "Jnana-Yoga" in the French translation. It was all the more striking to us, as the person who had brought it and who read from it was not known to us personally and did not know by that time that either the Swami or myself were interested in the teachings of Swamiji. It was the Director of the secondary school for girls in Lausanne, one of the greatest educational institutions in Switzerland, and he opened the discussion by reading approximately 5 pages one day when he was in the chair. This is a most remarkable proof of the way the teachings of Swamiji permeate many groups and circles of all kinds as soon as they have been translated into the language of the country. In this connection, it is most gratifying to report the amazingly quick progress which Swami Siddheswarananda has made in his study of French, progress for which Mr. and Mrs. S—, his Paris hosts, are mostly responsible. He can now cope, in perfect comfort, with any conversation on any topic whatsoever...."

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta

Among the permanent memorials that have sprung up in the wake of the splendid celebrations that came off a year ago in connection with the centenary of Sri Ramakrishna, this Institute can be counted as an important one. Beginning in a rented room with a very modest plan of work, it has been able to enlist the sympathy and support of professors, writers and well-educated enthusiastic youths ready to render voluntary service on its behalf, and has now emerged to greater prominence by its removal to the new premises at 19, Keshab Chandra Sen St., on Nov. 1st, '38. The new spacious building, which once belonged to late Ishan Chandra Mukher-

jee, and was visited by Sri Ramakrishna several times, is in the heart of the city with many important colleges and schools in its proximity. It could easily accommodate a shrine, a reading-room, a library and a lecture hall. A decently equipped reading-room and a small library are now open to the public in its premises. Weekly discourses and periodical lectures are given by members of the Institute, professors of the Calcutta University and other Indian and foreign scholars on religious, philosophical and other topics, both in the Institute and outside under its auspices. Dr. Mario Carelli (of the University of Rome) Major P. Bardhan, Swami Srivasananda, Dr. Mahendranath Sircar, Dr. Kalidas Nag and Dr. P. D. Sastri are among the prominent persons who have recently delivered very instructive lectures on some of the important and interesting themes. The Institute is yet in its beginning stage; but it has a broad-based scheme of work. Its goal is to make the drooping Hindu society dynamic and to share the spiritual wealth with other nations that want it. The measure of success it would achieve is entirely dependent upon the financial and intellectual support it could command. It may be hoped that such a noble cause will have ample support from liberal-minded lovers of culture.

Bengal Flood Relief

Last week 139 mds. 22 srs. of rice were distributed among 3263 recipients of 80 villages from our 6 relief centres in the Faridpur and Murshidabad Districts. The Charitable Dispensaries conducted by our relief camps at Paresnathpur and Kedarchandpur with a view to curing malaria and other ailments that appeared in the wake of the floods treated 1570 cases, of which 760 were malarial. We shall have to continue the relief till the second week of December and spend nearly Rs. 1000 before it is wound up.

Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by (1) The President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Mylapore, Madras; (2) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

The Ramakrishna Mission Relief Work

The cyclone which swept along the coast of Orissa last month has caused terrible havoc to houses, crops and lands, and resulted also in death of cattle. The stock of food grains has been completely lost, and hundreds of poor helpless starving souls are unable even to quench their thirst, as great scarcity of drinking water prevails in several places.

Relief opened in Puri Dt.

Having inspected a large portion of the affected area and found relief absolutely necessary, the relief party which we deputed on the 13th instant opened relief work on the 21st at Parikud in the Puri District. The relief camp has been established at Balugaon from where they cross the Chilka Lake over to Parikud and its vicinity—places where no relief has reached so far owing to their inaccessibility for distribution of rice, which the situation immediately demands. We have begun the relief with the slender resources at our disposal. Funds are urgently required to cope with the relief of this acute distress. Details of the work will be published in due course.

Sri Ramakrishna Competitive Examination, 1938.

The following are the results of the Sri Ramakrishna Competitive Examination conducted at various places in the Mad-

ras Presidency in October, 1938, under the auspices of the Sri Ramakrishna Seva Samithi, Rajahmundry.

SUB-JUNIORS :—

1st Prize :—No. 102—S. Lakshmikanthamma.

2nd Prize :—No. 122—B. Subba Rao.

1st Class :—46, 102, 103, 122.

2nd Class :—72, 97, 98, 99, 100, 104, 127.

3rd Class :—4, 44, 66, 74, 93, 94, 117, 121, 123, 128, 129.

JUNIORS :—

1st Prize :—No. 38—M. K. Subrahmanyam.

2nd Prize :—No. 37—M. K. Balasubrahmanyam.

1st Class :—15, 17, 34, 37, 38.

2nd Class :—9, 11, 32, 40, 58, 61, 70, 79, 84, 92, 111, 112.

3rd Class :—13, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 28, 35, 36, 54, 55, 59, 62, 63, 64, 75, 78, 81, 86, 87, 88-A, 91, 107, 108, 114, 130.

SENIORS :—

1st Prize :—No. 68—L. V. Subba Rao.

2nd Prize :—No. 132—S. Krishnamurthy.

1st Class :—68, 132.

2nd Class :—67.

3rd Class :—3, 76.

Special prize for ladies :—67—V. Lakshmi Bai.

The prizes will be sent in due course to the addresses of Chief Superintendents of the respective centres for favour of distribution to the candidates.

The next examination will be held on 5-11-1939.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXV]

FEBRUARY, 1939

[No. 10

HINDU ETHICS

कनकमपि रहस्यवेक्ष्य बुद्ध्या तृणमिव यः समवैति वै परस्वम्
भवति च भगवत्पदन्यचेताः पुरुषवरं तमवेहि विष्णुभक्तम् ॥
स्फटिकगिरिशिलामलः क विष्णुर्भनसि नृणां क च मत्सरादिदोषः
न हि दुहिनमयूखरश्मिपुञ्जो भवति हुताशनदीप्तिजः प्रतापः ॥
विमलमतिरमत्सरः प्रशान्तः शुचिचरितोऽखिलसत्त्वमित्रभूतः
प्रियहितवक्त्रोऽस्तमानमायो वसति सदा हृदि तस्य वासुदेवः ॥
वसति हृदि सनातने च तस्मिन् भवति पुमान् जगतोऽस्य सौम्यरूपः
क्षितिरसमतिरम्यमात्मनोऽन्तः कथयति चारुतयैव शालपोतः ॥
यमनियमविधूतकल्मषाणामनुदिनमच्युतसक्तमानसानाम्
अपगतमदमानमत्सरानां त्यज भट दूरतरेण मानवानाम् ॥

Know that excellent man to be a devotee of Vishnu, who coming at pure gold in secret, considers that, which is another's property, but as grass, and remains always absolutely God-minded. What a great difference is there between the Lord, the very crystalline embodiment of purity and holiness, on the one hand, and the human mind, turbid with rivalry and other evils, on the other ! The glowing heat of fire does not abide in a cluster of lunar rays. The Lord is ever present in the heart of that man, who has a pure mind, who is clean of the spirit of competition, who is calm and pure in behaviour, who is a friend of all, whose speech is sweet and salutary and who has trampled under foot all pride and wiliness. And when the Lord resides in him he appears to the whole world soft and peaceful, just as the beautiful sap that runs in the tender Sala plant discloses itself to the observer by its transparency. (Says Yama to his soldiers) : Depart quickly from those men whose sins have been dispersed by due moral practices and holy observances, whose minds are once for all dedicated to the unchanging Lord and in whom there is no room for arrogance, uncharitableness and malice.

Vishnu Purana.

THE DIVINE

[In this and the ensuing issues for the year, we shall publish a series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna's views on the fundamental problems of spiritual life, based on his recorded sayings. In the course of these studies we shall also have occasion to take a passing view of many questions of absorbing interest in modern life and thought. 'The Divine' is the tenth of the series.]

I

ALL spiritual world-views include a theory of the highest Being. This theory forms, as it were, the basis of all the aspirations and endeavours they inculcate in the seeker, as well as the goal they depict as the end of all spiritual striving. In some systems like Buddhism a studied attempt is made to be absolutely silent about the nature of the highest Being. This is perhaps due to an unconscious feeling that to theorise about the Ultimate when one is far away from it will be like putting the cart before the horse, and that indulgence in such speculation is more likely to divert the aspirant from practical endeavour, than help him in the same. Vedanta, too, in its higher flights shows the same tendency. As Brahman, the highest Being, is beyond the ken of thought and word, Vedanta advocates either complete silence, or failing that, mere negative epithets, or failing even that, indirect indications, as constituting Its only legitimate description.

In spite of all this, man everywhere has sought for some definite description of the ultimate Reality, some concrete formulation of it to which his thought may hold on in his spiritual struggles. Destructive criticism can easily point out internal contradictions in these theories; it can demonstrate their futility in giving

man any conviction regarding the Ultimate. Yet the great spiritual leaders of men, while being fully conscious of these defects, have preached theories regarding the nature of the highest Being, God, Brahman, the Divine or whatever else it may be called, and spiritually inclined people all the world over have held fast to them as their greatest support in life.

In the teachings of the Master also we find a theory of the Divine stated in intellectual concepts. He is no philosopher in the academic sense of the term. The Divine is for him not an intellectual postulate, but a living presence more real than the common objects we experience in every-day life. Hence it is not by syllogisms but by the testimony of his life that he demonstrates the existence and nature of the Divine. Yet living as he did in the midst of the various philosophical traditions of this land, and speaking, as he had to do, to people of different religious sects occupying different levels of receptivity, he had to clothe his realisations in various intellectual concepts for the instruction of men. These intellectual presentations, however, varied according to the nature of the audiences he spoke to. This is not to be taken to mean that he played to the galleries. The great spiritual teacher that he was, the truth of the Divine was not for him a fixed dogma, a

static object photographed, as it were, by thought like the fixed things of sensuous life with definite boundaries. It was for him a living palpitating reality, beyond the oppositions of change and staticity, — 'one yet many, unmoving yet faster than mind and out-running pursuit, near yet far away, within all yet outside all too.' Hence the Deity he preached is the very principle of plasticity itself, of which even the adaptability of life is but a shadow. It is the living waters of the spirit that fills every cup, whatever its shape and capacity be. Hence we need not dub him as belonging to this or that school of thought when we find him employing particular concepts. For him these concepts were only devices for evoking the sense of the Divine in minds endowed with different tendencies, and every one was as good as the other, provided it had the desired effect. With this reservation we may proceed to state briefly the lines along which he used to intellectualise his experiences regarding the Highest.

II

In order to make the theory of the Divine as comprehensive as possible, all the states of consciousness should be taken into consideration. Hence the Master says: "I accept everything. The super-conscious state, waking state, dream, deep sleep, Brahman, Jiva, creation—I accept all these different states and manifestations of the one Being. Otherwise the full weight will suffer diminution." In Super-consciousness (state of Nirvikalpa) Being alone is. Speech cannot express It. As the Vedas, the Tantras, the Puranas and all the

scriptures of the world, have been expressed by the human mouth, they have all in a sense become Uchchishta, defiled by contact with the mouth. Pure Being, or the Absolute beyond thought and word, is alone undefiled. The utmost that seers have done is only to give inadequate indications of It like one describing the ocean by exclamations like, "It is a big expanse of water! It is water, water all round!" It is beyond all relative ideas of attribute and substance, rest and motion, good and bad, knowledge and ignorance, real and unreal. No human standard applies to it.

The individual does not cognise the Absolute in the sense he cognises the discrete objects of the relative world. For the Absolute is not something separate from the real self of the individual. What we ordinarily call ourself or individuality is only a phantasm of the Absolute, Who is the real self. This phantasm, encrusted with the accretions of evolution—the age-long pursuit of 'woman and gold'—is what we call our ego with its functions of knowing, feeling and willing in reference to the external world. As long as we mistake our real self to be this ego, the Absolute is beyond the ken of our understanding. The ego-centred mind has to be purified by spiritual disciplines. When perfectly purified, the ego dies, i.e., recognises its phantom nature and sinks, as it were, into its sustaining consciousness, the real self or the Absolute. This is the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. In this state the purified ego becomes unconditioned and realises itself as the Absolute, the unconditioned spirit. Hence the Master says: "It is true enough the conditioned mind cannot realise Him. But He

can be realised by the pure mind (Suddha-buddhi), which is the same thing as pure reason, which again is the same thing as pure unconditioned spirit."

III

In this state of absolute consciousness of Brahman, owing to the absence of all duality, there arises no question of creation or of the ultimate cause of things, of delusion or of that which is above delusion. But to take only this absolute state when we intellectualise the experience of the Divine, and ignore the relative dualistic world of our waking state, would be 'to allow the full weight to suffer diminution', in the Master's expressive words. Hence arises the question: What is the cause of this stupendous universe with its multiplicity of egos and limitless extension of matter? How has the undifferentiated Absolute become differentiated? One may answer that the question is illogical, which is the same as telling that the question cannot be answered, or that we do not know it. The intellect, however, remains unsatisfied with that position, because, in spite of the absurdities that may be pointed out in the question, one feels that there is a real point involved in it. A more satisfactory solution has been attempted in the theory that in regard to the non-dual Absolute the differentiated phenomena is only an apparent manifestation, real in as far as it concerns the consciousness experiencing it, but unreal in as far as it concerns the Absolute, It being unaffected by the phenomena. This may be satisfactory as an analysis of facts, but the questions referred to demand not only an *analysis* but an

explanation as well. Even if differentiation be only apparent, what exactly is it in the Absolute that gives rise to this appearance?

Again take the intuition of the Absolute in the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. In that state the ego is completely dissipated, and it is the unconditioned Being sustaining the ego that realises the Absolute. But the history of great mystics records that in the lives of some, even after Nirvikalpa Samadhi, there takes place a reappearance of conditioned consciousness centering round the ego now completely transformed. This difficulty might be got over by saying that there is some residual Karma in their case; but that would be equal to questioning the genuineness of the unconditioned state obtained by them, —a dangerous thing in itself, as the experience of these seers is the only testimony of this state.

Hence the question remains: How does the undifferentiated manifest this great universe even as an apparent phenomenon? How does the Jiva (individualised consciousness) gain the undifferentiated consciousness, and having gained it, again come to be endowed with a transformed ego? These considerations take us to the idea that the unconditioned Brahman has in It a Power of Intelligence, variously known as Shakti, Maya, Iswara and the Divine Mother. The Master prefers to call It by the sweet name of the Divine Mother. What is the relation of the Intelligent Power, the Divine Mother, to the unconditioned consciousness or the Absolute? Let the Master speak: "When the Supreme Being is thought of as inactive, neither creating, sustaining, nor destroy-

ing, I call Him by the name Brahman or Purusha. When I think of Him as active, creating, sustaining, destroying, I call Him by the name of Sakti, Maya, Prakriti, or the Personal God. But the distinction between Brahman, the changeless Impersonal Being, on the one hand, and Sakti, the active Divine Personality, on the other, is a distinction without a difference. They are one and the same as fire and its burning property, milk and its whiteness, a gem and its brightness, a serpent and its zig-zag motion are the same. The one cannot be conceived without the other." These analogies should not be taken too literally, and the Master is very well aware of their limitation. They are only meant to show that the Impersonal and the Personal, Brahman and the Divine Mother are one and the same, that the Supreme Being is a synthesis beyond the oppositions of change and changelessness, personality and impersonality, that in the Divine change does not mean obliteration of the original being, nor changelessness mere static immobility. Being and Power are thus an indivisible Whole, a synthesis of all oppositions.

In all the teachings of the Master on the Divine, the intellectual presentation he gives refers to the view of one endowed with the ego and world-consciousness, whether as a real or apparent manifestation. For the Absolute and the Unconditioned is realised only in Nirvikalpa Samadhi, but all expression and philosophising are possible from the point of view of the ego alone. Hence the experience of Samadhi cannot be stated as a philosophy; philosophising becomes possible only with ego consciousness

in some form or other. When the ego is there, the universe too is there, and in the presence of these, the Power that is at their back has also to be taken into consideration. Nay, that Power has to be taken as the *sole* consideration, and the universe of name and form and the Absolute even have to be represented as two aspects of it—the world as its relative aspect and the Absolute as its transcendental aspect. Hence in spite of the full and unqualified admission of the Absolute and unconditioned consciousness, the Personal God or the Divine Mother, the Power of the Absolute, acquires a position of unique importance in the Master's system of thought. For it is She that forms the ultimate explanation of creation; it is She who retains or wipes off the ego and individuality; and it is She again, who, thus wiping off the ego, reveals Herself as the unconditioned Absolute, and if it pleases Her, re-enlivens the ego, now transformed by the Divine touch, as the individual consciousness of the enlightened man. Hence the Master says: "My Divine Mother is no other than the Absolute. She it is to Whom the six systems of philosophy with all their disquisitions furnish no clue. It has pleased my Divine Mother to have become, in the course of evolution, not only the individual self but also the external world. If it pleases Her, She may take away the last trace of ego from any created being and bless him with the knowledge of the Absolute. Brahman is thus revealed by my Mother as the Unconditioned as realised in Samadhi alone, and as being the Impersonal side of Her own self. Thus the key to the realisation of the Absolute is with the Divine

Person. Again, the sage in Samadhi is sometimes kept on in that state and sometimes not. Who keeps him in that blessed state and who brings him to the plane of sense-consciousness? Why, it is the Divine Person, my Divine Mother. That power of discrimination which the philosopher relies upon, comes from Her, my Divine Mother. Prayer, meditation, devotion, self-surrender, are all likewise derived from my Omnipotent Mother. Such a Person cannot be unreal. She is the personal side of the one Reality, the Absolute. She is the Brahman of the Vedānta, the Atman of the Upanishads."

Thus a scrutiny of the Master's teachings on the Divine leads one to the following conclusion: The problems of creation and liberation are what takes us to a philosophy of the Divine. Both these necessitate the conception of the Divine as Personality, as the Intelligent Power, also called the Divine Mother. But the Divine Mother is not a limited being. While being Personality, she is also the Impersonal Absolute. At a certain stage of the aspirant's evolution, She wipes off his ego and reveals Her absolute aspect. This is entirely a gift of Hers, wholly depending on Her grace. A kind master keeps an old and faithful servant on his own seat and says, "He is my own self." The attainment of the Impersonal is something like that. It does not in any way imply a negation of the Personal, a subtraction of it, and the Divine Mother is in no sense an unreality. It is true that in the Nirvikalpa state, wherein the Absolute is realised, there is no ego, and hence no question of creation and liberation, and therefore the Personal God too, arises

in it. This is so, not because the Divine Mother is a myth, but because she, out of Her grace, reveals to the individual the real identity of his consciousness with Her own unconditioned consciousness which is the same as the Absolute. If it pleases Her, She restores the individual consciousness as the transformed and enlightened ego. Thus the Divine Mother is there from beginning to end. Unreality is a term which can never be applied to Her. The best that philosophy can do is to describe the Divine as Impersonal-Personal.

IV

Besides manifesting Herself as life and matter, the Divine Mother reveals Herself also as various forms of glory and as Divine Incarnations. The first of these is the many Divine forms that spiritual aspirants realise in the course of their meditations. These are, however, to be distinguished from what heated brains visualise in their phantasies. The latter are purely subjective creations of the minds concerned like dream experiences and they leave no impression on the mind. Very often they are pathological, and are wish-fulfilments relating to the lower levels of life. They have no spiritual significance; on the other hand they lead to the degeneracy of the person concerned.

True Divine visions are not mere phantasies of the perceiving mind. They have a trans-subjective reference. They may be described as projections of the Cosmic Mind, or as the Divine infilling and vivifying the images in the racial mind. Their effect on the perceiving mind is quite different from that of the other type. They leave vivid impressions, set in

motion powerful currents of blissful emotion in the mind, attenuate body consciousness, strengthen the spirit of renunciation, increase knowledge and devotion, and impart an unwavering consciousness of the Divine presence. According to the Master, these personal forms of the Divine are by no means less real, but infinitely more real, than the body or the mind or the external world. They are seen only by the purified human soul. In the course of the Sadhana a spiritual body (Bhagavati-tanu) derived from the Lord, having its own subtle organs of perception, is developed, and it is with this these forms are seen. But the forms should never be taken as the end of Divine realisation. They are only milestones on the way, and it is not even necessary that every aspirant should see them. Then again, these forms do not last in the end. They are like icebergs formed in the ocean of Divinity by the cooling influence of devotion. With the rise of the sun of Knowledge, these icebergs resolve into the nameless and formless ocean of Divinity. They merge in the only Power behind the cosmos, the Divine Mother, Whose modes of expression they are to suit the needs and temperaments of different types of devotees.

The Divine Incarnation is another manifestation of the Mother. While all living beings may be said to be Her manifestations, the Divine Incarnations are so in a special sense. Unlike other beings they are not borne for the reaping of their own Karma. While there is strong human element in them, they are aware of their Divinity from early life. All their life's strivings are not meant for their

emancipation but for the fulfilment of a mission that affects the world at large. They are born with extraordinary spiritual powers. They possess the highest Bhakti and highest Jnana in an equal measure. As a prince can go into all the chambers of a palace and not a stranger, they can go into, and stay in, any state of realisation from the lowest to the highest. Their ego is so thin that through it God is always visible. If there is an aperture in the wall, the whole of the other side is visible through it; and if it be big enough, one can pass through it as well. The ego of the Incarnations resembles the wall with big aperture. Though they are endowed with bodies they are always in a state of Yoga; they have equal hold on the Absolute and the relative, and can at will pass from the relative to the Absolute through Samadhi, and also come back to the relative from the Absolute state.

In spiritual powers they surpass ordinary perfect men. If ordinary perfect men are like logs of wood in a river, the Incarnations are like boats; the former can carry only one or two across the sea of birth and death, but the latter carry innumerable beings. In fact they are the manifestation in flesh of the love aspect of God, his redeeming power, and can give salvation at will. For the man seeking liberation this redeeming aspect of God is the most important thing, just as the udder of the cow is what matters for the man who wants milk. To recognise the Incarnation in truth and in spirit is equal to realising the Deity. One can claim to have touched the holy Ganges, if he touches it somewhere along its course; it is not necessary

for him to touch it from Gomukhi to Gangasagar. The Incarnation is such a manifestation of the Divine Mother, where devotees can easily contact the

highest love, bliss and holiness. Hence the Divine Incarnation forms an important part of the Master's conception of the Divine.

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

By A Devotee

✽ T was 8-30 p.m., Mahapurusha Maharaj was seated on his bedstead and holding conversation with a monk of the Ramakrishna Ashram, Jamtara. He says: To-day I received a letter of R. . . . He has referred, in particular, to his own personal matters in that letter. One night he went to send you off at the Station; on returning at 10 o'clock he took his meals and retired to bed without performing his usual Japa. His sleep broke at a certain hour of the night and the thought occurred to him about the omission of Japa. He felt repentant. He asked other monks about his duty under the circumstances. But none could suggest any step. He was seized with extreme restlessness and strong remorse. So he has written to me about the consequence of his action. He has required me to prescribe a form of expiation. I shall write to him in reply.

One Brahmachari: Maharaj, Should one resort to expiation under such circumstances.

Mahapurushji: Oh, Yes. But by expiation is only meant fasting for one day and devoting that day exclusively for Japa or repetition of the Name of God. But it is not the extreme form of fasting even without a drop of water; one may take a little quantity of fried rice, say, the quan-

tity that could be bought for a pice or two. At night one must perform Japa as long as possible; and the repetition of the Holy Name must not be less than ten thousand times. It is commendable to have such steadfast devotion to a spiritual work.

One Sannyasi: To me Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) told: You perform Japa ten thousand times every day. This will do you immense good. Try to continue this habit for one year. But I could not continue this habit for a year. These days I am so much engrossed with my Ashram activities that I find no time for meditation and Japa.

Mahapurushji: Sometimes it so happens that under the pressure of work, sufficient time cannot be allotted to spiritual practices. But it would be unwise to omit them altogether from the daily routine. It is quite true that the work is for God; and this is an effective aid for remembering and thinking of Him. But one should not give up Japa and meditation altogether. For how long the work can last? The time will come when you will lose the necessary physical strength to do any work. What will then sustain you? Besides, the work unaccompanied by meditation and Japa degenerates into a mechanical performance devoid of

proper spirit. Then one forgets that it is the work of God. Egoism raises its head and the work instead of purifying the mind rather contaminates it. The highest aim of life is not work but the realisation of God. The guiding motive of life is God-realisation. That which makes us forget God

is an evil work. Even under the pressing demands of active life you should devote yourself to the practice of meditation and Japa. This will fill the mind with a high degree of contentment. This is what endowes an aspirant with the requisite qualification for doing work.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By R. Ramakrishnan, M.A., L.T.

[The 104th Birthday Anniversary of the Master falls on the 22nd of this month, reminding us of his life and message. The following paragraphs offer interesting and instructive reading for the occasion.]

SRI Ramakrishna lived on this earth of ours just a little over fifty years ago, and men who talked and moved with him are still happily in our midst, and serve to connect us with the Paramahansa. Ramakrishna is no legendary hero round whose life successive generations of disciples have woven a halo of imaginary glory. His extraordinary life, on the other hand, was subjected to the severest tests of relentless reason by minds of a highly scientific temperament, and his biographers are historians, and not writers of epics. It cannot be denied that the nearness of Ramakrishna to the present gene-inducing vast multitudes to pay re-ration (his recency) is a factor in verential homage to him. For Ramakrishna's recorded life stands before us challenging doubters to doubt and scoffers to scoff. He demonstrated the reality of the spiritual life even on the physical plane! He never mystified those that came to him, with mere intellectual philosophising. God was not an idea with him, God was a burning reality, and he was ready to

make Him a reality to every one. He did not take the eager inquirer along subtle paths of reasoning to the abode of the Reality. He simply said, 'I see, and you too shall see'. The utter 'historicity' of Ramakrishna's doings, the total absence of 'interpolations' in his life, the verification of his experiences by intellectual giants and scientific geniuses—these factors compel us to adore him. How indeed can we refrain from honouring the saint who showed that God and things of the spirit are not after all fine poetry, are not the outcome of intellectual imagination, but are concrete things which we of the earth can handle and experience? How in fact can human minds fail to adore, and human souls fail to be drawn to, one, who brought practical religion out of the inaccessible heights of the Himalayas and the impenetrable forest retreats, out of far away caves and distant hermitages, to the busy streets and the crowded lanes of civilised Calcutta, who showed that religion is not meant for those who have done with the business of life,

and have retired from earth's battlefield, but that it is intended for the busiest workers and the labouring masses in their day to day existence, and who converted the home and the office into a temple, and the beggar into a God?

The truth of the spiritual life as expounded by Sri Ramakrishna is very simple; and hence eminently satisfying. His appeal is to the heart of man. He brings a supremely consoling message to despondent minds, and soothes afflicted hearts. This man who walked and talked with God never once ceased to be human. In fact it is this predominantly human trait in his character that endears him to one and all. As we read his recorded conversations and see how, like a very child, he laughed and sported, and how utterly simple and guileless he was, our hearts are naturally drawn to him. He never asked any human being to stand outside the circle of his love and grace. The worst sinner or the basest drunkard was easily redeemed by him, for he was able to pierce through the externalities to the central humanity in the man, and he touched the spring of real personality in the individual and helped him to evolve out of the self-created bondages. Dogmas and rituals, he showed, are of secondary importance. Renunciation is more an affair of the heart. Work is worship. The warring creeds quarrel like ignorant folk over names and words. Sri Ramakrishna stormed the citadel of the Most High from a thousand different positions, and saw all the several faces of the Supreme Being. He was therefore able to say to every pilgrim, 'Yes, you too will reach the city of God.' All of us are now,

so very familiar with Ramakrishna's doctrine that all religions are paths to God that, one is afraid, we are apt to forget the momentous nature of the discovery. Students of history know that not very long ago on earth, and that too not in the dark ages, but in a world illumined by the Renaissance, people thought it their duty to stamp out all religions except their own; and that in those days religion was a major cause of national wars. It was to a world, distracted by the claims of quarrelsome religions, which even inculcated into their votaries a most unhealthy spirit of chauvinism, that this Wanderer of all the paths came with his message. Sri Ramakrishna was an artist who loved to hear the divine symphony in a hundred different notes. Why, he asked, should we lose the joy of life by listening to the same tune for ever? To become a disciple of Ramakrishna, one need not embrace this or that particular organised religion. He was born a Hindu, and perhaps, Hindus may be proud of him. But he does not solely or wholly belong to Hinduism and India. A Christian or a Muslim has as much right on, and as many claims to, him as a Hindu has. He only makes the Buddhist a better Buddhist, and a Zoroastrian a better votary of Zoroaster. He is a splendid teacher who does not prescribe the same exercise for all the pupils, but changes his exercise according to the capacity and the bent of each student. He knows how to enable every individual to reach the goal by walking along, what to that individual is, the most congenial path. His love was all-inclusive. The divinity in each person was so manifestly clear to him that no one was asked

to stand outside the limit of his grace. There was room for one and all under the Banyan tree of his great kindness. He taught by precept and example that religion and spirituality are not the business of a particular station in life, but are meant to permeate through the whole range of human life. 'A devotee should not be a fool' was his pregnant remark to one who allowed the tenderness of spirituality to influence the transaction of commercial business. He showed that there is no such thing as worldly wisdom as distinguished from spiritual wisdom. The spiritually perfect man alone can do worldly work in a flawless manner. He taught his wife Sarada Devi, not only the highest truths, but also the smallest details of house-keeping, as the trimming of the lamp, the manner of travelling and the need for adjustability when going abroad. By cheerfully taking the role of the 'husband' and the 'householder' he brought a new light to bear on the 'relation between the sexes.'

Sri Ramakrishna dived deep into the ocean of God and came out with rich jewels which he lavishly distributed to all. He spoke as one with authority, as one who saw and felt, and not as one who merely argued and guessed; and mankind has gathered round the master explorer who has shown us how to avoid the interminable lanes and the confusing paths, and take the shortest and the most direct route to the Reality.

Sri Ramakrishna is not the exclusive possession of Bengal or even of India. To put forth such a claim in regard to a man who embraced with one hand the limitless Infinite,

and with the other, the entire body of humanity, would be childish.

We must then remember another fact of history. Though the Reality is always the same and the truth discovered by various seers is also essentially the same, historically speaking and taking our basis on the fact that there has been such a thing as the growth of civilisation or the progress of humanity, we must concede that as the ages have passed, mankind has been having an increasingly real and a gradually expanding view of ultimate verities. Therefore, though God has been, and will ever be, the same, and though from times immemorial He has been revealing Himself to man, yet, speaking from the standpoint of the multitude, and not of the individual seers, as centuries have passed, more pages of the Book of God have been opened to us. In short there has been an evolution in the conception by man of God. The warrior-God of the primitive tribes no longer satisfies us. Even the meticulously just God who punishes the wicked and rewards the good no longer satisfies us. We are too very ready to picture God with our own notions of propriety! Similarly the 'tribal' religions that did good service to the world in old days may no longer be found to be equally useful. Science has worked wonders, has annihilated time and distance, has made us blush at the memory of our old follies. Once we thought that national wars were righteous things. Now we laugh at the idea. Our convictions about several other things have similarly been changing. Therefore what the old prophets preached may not be applicable in toto to us of to-day. It does not immediately

follow that those old prophets are to be discarded, or that we should regard them as but partial seers. A prophet has a two-fold aspect. One is the unchanging eternal side. The other is the time aspect. In other words a prophet has a universal as well as a periodical appeal. Every prophet may see the face of God in full glory, but when he comes down to the earthly plane he reveals only so much as can be grasped by the people of his day. He has with him celestial food in abundance, but he distributes it only according to the needs and capacities of his immediate hearers. The food that appeased the hunger of an ancient generation may not satisfy us, of to-day. Till now we had national prophets and truly it is they that have fed us all along and given us our present growth. But to-day we are international-minded. And though we still find amidst us traces of our old barbarism, we are certainly marching towards an era when the unity of humanity will be more emphasised than the diversity, and nations will live like brothers. Such a happy state may not dawn tomorrow, but it is there in the womb of the immediate future. The old religions will be unable to meet the demands of the new age. We want a universal religion, a religion that does not lay stress on birth and colour and locality, but emphasises the simple humanity in man. Ramakrishna is great, because he is the prophet of this universal religion. He is the Jagadguru, the world-teacher.

Of course Sri Ramakrishna did not found a new 'religion.' What need was there for it? He lived in his short span of life the entire life of mankind and brought to light certain

truths which had not been sufficiently emphasised in the past, though they were there all the same. That Ramakrishna merits the title of Jagadguru cannot be disputed. About which prophet of old can we say that he practised Islam, Christianity and the many phases of Hinduism and found that all of them led the aspirant to the same goal? Which prophet preached as clearly as did Ramakrishna that God is without form as well as with form and yet beyond both form and formlessness? Was it not Ramakrishna who said aye, aye, to every pilgrim on every path, and regarded the sinner as at worst a potential saint? Was it not again he that rediscovered the truth that sex does not matter in the sphere of the sexless Atman? Was it not he that convinced the moderns that religion, far from impoverishing the material aspect of life would in reality enrich it? His doors were open to all, and 'his love knew no boundary, geographical or other'. He told us in meaningful words, 'Jiva is Siva,' and brought a wholesome revolution in the ideology of social service. And his religion was all-comprehensive; no department of life was left untouched by it. The monks of old who retired from the world to find peace have now given place to monks who live amidst erring humanity and mould them. With the Ramakrishna touch, the laboratory becomes a monastery and the home a sanctuary. Ramakrishna was in himself a Parliament of religions; but he was more than that. It is in exemplification of this all-inclusive nature of Ramakrishna's message that during the Centenary celebrations exhibitions of arts and crafts were also

held. Ramakrishna never destroys, but always fulfils; he makes a sweeper a better sweeper and a statesman a better statesman.

To those enlightened people of the world who are too big to squeeze themselves into the narrow formalism and the rigid littleness of self-satisfied faiths that are intolerant of other beliefs, the message of Ramakrishna comes like freshening balm. While others try to enslave the soul in the meshes of particular dogmas and rituals, Ramakrishna liberates the soul into the wide sky and helps it to soar aloft. His catholicity of outlook and his deep humanism are responsible for bringing the West also under his banner. Sri Ramakrishna floats on the ocean of Infinity, extending a warm welcome to all the

little and big rivers that, sooner or later, directly or by winding paths, tardily or fast, flow into it. Other prophets, have spoken to other peoples in other lands, but to us of to-day who are on the threshold of a new age, the guiding voice is the voice of Ramakrishna. To adore Ramakrishna is not to deny or belittle other seers and prophets. For he is the consummation of all the Godmen that have preceded him. Many there have been who were nation-builders. Sri Ramakrishna is the builder of humanity. In the words of Prof. Sylvain Levi, the great Indologist, 'As Sri Ramakrishna's heart and mind were for all countries, his name too is the common property of mankind.'

COLLECTIVE KARMA

By Jean Herbert

[Mon. Jean Herbert is a distinguished author and journalist of France. The following article forms an analytic study of collective Karma from a purely rational view-point.]

IN the course of the last few months, many people throughout the world, and perhaps more particularly in Europe, have felt the imminent danger of a terrific world-war in the course of which millions of human beings were likely to suffer heavily. This has perhaps helped them to see in a somewhat different light the many wars that are raging at present in various parts of the globe. It has probably brought them to wonder more seriously than they did before why such calamities should befall humanity, and why so many people should be made to suffer in

total disproportion to the normal responsibilities which they seem to have incurred.

The twin concepts of reincarnation and Karma, as propounded by Eastern philosophy, and especially by Vedanta, seem to offer a more satisfactory explanation than others; but to most of us the problem remains unsolved to a very great extent. It seems to me that the notion of collective Karma might help some people to reach a solution which would not be shocking to their notions of justice and morality.

The universe of manifestation, which our senses enable us to perceive, is evidently an infinitely complex and intricate whole which the greatest intellects are unable to grasp in its totality. At best we can only conceive a very limited and partial aspect of it—some infinitely small sections that are presented through time, space and other possible categories of our sense impressions. Whatever idea we may form of it can only be a rough picture, a very elementary sketch of the reality; it can no more embrace the universe in its totality than a photograph can claim to show all that constitute the thing or person photographed. It can only be a kind of arbitrary cross section, something comparable to the plan which an architect draws of a building. Innumerable other cross-sections remain possible and each one of them can be just as true as the one we have happened to choose, even if they be entirely different and seemingly contradictory.

The idea of collective Karma is only one of those cross-sections, the truthfulness of which in no way invalidates others which are more commonly accepted. It adds one kind of information which other sections do not supply so readily; but that is precisely the information which can help us to solve the problems with which we are confronted in crises like the recent one.

The unit which we are most accustomed to consider when we think of ourselves and of others like us, is man, the individual, or as some now prefer to call it in the West, the person. We are so much accustomed to that unit that it seems to us self-evident, imposed by nature and the only one

possible. This is particularly the case when we think of Karma and the problems connected with it. It seldom occurs to us that the unit of the human individual might be only one of a long list of units, each of which would be a multiple of the one preceding it, and have as its own multiple the one following it; or, in other words, to take a more concrete comparison, might be like the *day*, which in the scale of units stands above the hour, the minute, the second, &c., but stands below the week, the month, the year, &c.

If we stop to think, we cannot help admitting that even if we consider only the physical body, man consists of different elements. We may distinguish the bones, the muscles, the nerves, the blood, &c. We may also distinguish the head, the arms, the legs &c. We may again subdivide man into a certain number of cells; or again into molecules or into atoms &c. Each one of those elements seems to have an existence of its own which is not identical with that of the human individual. Every day certain of our cells die while our physical body as a whole remains alive. Recent biological researches have shown that some organs, *e.g.*, the heart, can be kept alive and active long after the individual from whom they come have ceased to live. Molecules of certain chemical products which have been absorbed into our body and form part of it go into some of our cells and nourish them or kill them. The white corpuscles in our blood lead a life of their own which is remarkably similar to that of some so-called lower animals. Many other instances could be shown in illustration.

If we no longer regard man as purely physical, we can subdivide him into the gross body, the intellect, the will, the emotions, &c., all of which elements are closely connected and largely interdependent, but some of which can grow to a certain extent when others decline, and *vice versa*.

If now we turn to what we might call the "multiples" of man, we see that each individual human being is one of the elements which constitute larger units, such as the family, the nation, the profession, the caste, the social "classe", the race, the religious community, &c. Those groups existed before such and such individual (who is a member of them) was born, and will continue to exist after that individual is dead. Inversely, an individual may found or help to found one such group, of which he will then become a member at some given point of his life. The group may also cease to exist, while the individuals which composed it continue to live.

This does not prove, of course, that the "human unit" is not the most important for us in most respects, just as the inch may be much more important for the tailor than the mile or the millimetre, and the pound more important for the grocer than the ton or the grain. But if we consider that "human unit" as the only one, and completely forget the existence of all others which come either below it or above it in the same scale, we are apt to see only one aspect of the picture and to ignore others. And when we consider the possible or probable future of a whole group of human beings, we must logically take into consideration what belongs to that group as such, as distinguished from the individuals which go to com-

pose it. That includes the past history of the group, its tendencies, desires and Karma.

The problem of collective Karma is, therefore, one which should be considered most carefully when we think of the future of a nation, a caste, a religious community, a family or any other group. One very natural reaction with many people when the subject is mentioned to them for the first time, is that it brings one more element of complication into the idea we are to form of a most intricate world, which is a fact. But if we want to get as true a picture as possible, whether for the purposes of scientific investigation or even for arranging our own life on practical lines, the criterion should not be one of simplicity or complexity, but rather of completeness. By taking into account the notion of collective Karma, we are not introducing a new element into what governs our lives, but merely acknowledging one which exists, whether we will or not, and thereby preparing to acquire a certain mastery over it.

Let us now try to see how collective Karma can arise. In some cases the process is quite easy to follow. If a small group of men assemble for some definite purpose, either good or bad—whether to commit a murder and a burglary or to engage in some altruistic scientific research or philanthropic activity—they naturally expect to share the profits, the risks, the sacrifices and also the rewards or punishments, which are connected with it, in this life or in the hereafter. And we see no logical or ethical reason why they should not. It even seems natural to us in this case that their descendants should inherit

some of the fame, either good or bad, and some of the financial consequences of the action undertaken in common by them, and also some other and more subtle results.

When we consider a larger group, i.e., a caste, or a nation, or a social "classe", or a religious community, the application of the principle does not seem quite so self-evident. But it is a fact that all members of such a group share in many advantages and disadvantages as a direct result of their belonging to that group. West-erners enjoy a larger portion of material wealth and comfort than most other races. Indians have the benefit of a rich and fertile spiritual atmosphere in which their own individual spirituality can grow more rapidly. Jews have inherited an intelligence which gives them great advantages over others in many walks of life. Members of rich families or classes in any country have greater facilities than others for acquiring instruction and education and thus developing intellectually. The members of every one of these groups find it quite natural that they should thus be allowed to enjoy some advantages more fully than many of their fellow-men. But they do not often stop to consider how those advantages were acquired by the group, and what price was paid for them, or in other words, what Karma came with them.

Let us note *en passant* that the question seems perfectly pertinent when we think only of the individual. We do not consider in exactly the same light money which has been stolen and money which has been honestly earned. We expect stolen money to be more or less inseparable from a fairly heavy Karma. In many

cases we are not so particular about money which has been inherited, and a number of people would be at a loss to explain how the wealth they enjoy has been acquired. We are still less particular when the money has been transformed into some more subtle kind of wealth such as health or education. If the financial resources of our family or of the larger group into which we have been borne have enabled us to develop our intellectual faculties, or to acquire knowledge, or even to overcome illnesses or physical disabilities in our youth, or have made it easier for us to find in life the mate of our dreams, we seldom stop to wonder whether the advantages bought with those financial resources have not brought with them a share of collective Karma from which they are inseparable.

Both logically and ethically it seems difficult to imagine that we should be able to choose among the consequences of one action or a series of actions, accept only the profits and refuse what we deem undesirable. The mere fact that we enjoy, *consciously or not, willingly or not*, some of the advantages arising from our membership in a group, whether large or small, must unavoidably burden our shoulders with some of the collective Karma of that group, with some of the moral and Karmic responsibilities which the group incurred when acquiring the facilities and privileges which we have shared directly or indirectly.

The fact that we disapprove of the past actions of the group, or even that we have been misinformed about them, or that we know and suspect nothing of them, does not alter the fact that we reap the good results of the act-

ions, and that we thereby declare ourselves ready to share the collective Karma which follows them.

And it is sad to observe that in a very great majority of cases the relative superiority acquired by one group over others has been gained by means which in individual ethical life we should condemn rather severely. Conquest by force, economic exploitation and the many other methods which man has devised for living from the work of others, are often the origin of those great differences in the "standard of life" which some nations, races or social "classe" deem a matter of taking great pride in. The fact that we are more intelligent, or more cultivated or healthier or stronger or richer than many of our fellow-men should rather be to each one of us a source of wonder as to whether those advantages were not secured for us as a result of some kind of robbery or other of which some of our fellow-men were the victims.

Let us not think that mankind is the only possible victim of our actions productive of bad individual Karma. Our attitude towards animals in hunting or shooting or fishing or farming should not be ignored. And Zen Buddhism has stressed the importance of our attitude towards Nature, even in the realm of aesthetics. Perhaps the "original sin" as believed in by the devotees of many religions may not be entirely independent from the advantages which intelligent man has decided to take of less intelligent animals. That would make it also one category of collective Karma.

The idea, so familiar to Hindus, and so new to most Westerners, of the many influences, Karmic and otherwise, which material things bring with them, are also cognate to the notion of collective Karma. When we accept a present, we accept something of the Karma which accompanies the thing itself, and also some of the Karma of the person who gives it. This is perhaps more serious and dangerous in the case of the food that we incorporate into our physical body, as it is by no means impossible, even according to modern western sciences, that at the same time we should also incorporate into our more subtle body the more subtle elements, Karmic and others, which accompany the food.

What concerns us most, however, when we think of Karma, whether individual or collective, is how we can avoid accumulating it, and also how we can get rid of what has accumulated already. Roughly, the solutions for collective Karma should be substantially the same as for individual Karma. But in the former case we are tempted to imagine and utilise a certain number of "shortcuts" which would not come to our mind in the latter. It may, therefore, not be entirely useless to examine and to weigh them.

We should, in this connection, distinguish between the collective Karma of the group as a whole, and our own individual share of that collective Karma, remembering always that the latter is quite different from our own individual Karma. We might say that the total Karma of any individual is made up by his own individual Karma and his own individual

share of the collective Karma of all the groups to which he belongs.*

This leads us to consider the ethical problem of group-consciousness. We all feel that whenever we transfer some of our feelings, desires, ambitions or interests from our little ego to a group—whether family or class or caste or profession or race or nation or mankind as a whole—we progress morally by becoming less egocentric. And in fact in such an evolution we tend to accumulate less and less bad individual Karma. But if at the same time we feel very egoistic and jealous, and even unscrupulous, for the group which in our consciousness tends to take the place of our individual ego, we help to create a heavy collective Karma for that group and we shoulder our share of it. The problem, both ethical and Karmic, is therefore only transferred from one place to another, but not solved.

It is true that a group is something more, and probably also something less, than the total of all the smaller individual units which go to compose it. Putting together all the molecules which compose a cell will not make a cell. Putting together all the carbon and oxygen and nitrogen and hydrogen which compose the human body will not make one such body. Similarly, putting together all the men who compose a group will not make a group. Something else will have to be added, which does not belong to any of the individuals, *e.g.*, the group consciousness, the collec-

tive interests and aims and fears of the group.

When Maeterlinck studied the bees, the ants and the white ants, he was irresistibly led to suppose the existence of what he called the "spirit of the hive" or the "spirit of the ant-hill", which our scientific instruments have not enabled us to perceive with our senses, but which our intellect deems indispensable if we want to understand and explain the life of the bees or of the ants. It is something which cannot be, even in part, in any one of the separate insects, but to which each one of them is ready to sacrifice his labour and his life. Similarly we may speak of the spirit of a family, of a caste, of a nation or of a race, which exists and plays a large part in the life of the group even if the elements which go to compose the group have been assembled quite arbitrarily and even under false pretences.

It is certainly in our power to improve or to make heavier the collective Karma of a group of which we are members. We can do so by our actions, by our thoughts, our desires, &c. If for instance we exert our influence, however small, on our group to make it engage in a war of aggression against another group, or to exploit another group, we tend to make its Karma heavier. If we take part, physically or mentally or otherwise in such an action, and contribute to make it successful, we also increase the collective Karma.

In every one of those groups there are some ideas which we may say float in the air, for every member of the group to catch, but even apart from our own individual ideas, it is open to us to choose from among

* And possibly also a share or, should we say, a reaction ;—much more difficult to determine the Karma of all the elements which make up that individual.

those group ideas those which we want to accept and pass on or reflect with added power and intensity.

According to the state of our own inner being, we are apt to be attuned to some categories of ideas or vibrations better than to others, just as a radio receiving set can be attuned to some of the waves which pass over it, choose and pass on with added force some of them, and ignore the others. Our choice and action in the matter certainly exert a great influence on the collective Karma of the group. If we accept and reflect only thoughts of love, peace, disinterestedness, we shall help the group Karmically, whereas if we accept and reflect thoughts of hatred, violence, selfishness, &c., we shall greatly hinder the progress of the same group. And we undoubtedly have a duty towards our group which we should not ignore.

The problem is somewhat more difficult when we think more particularly of our own individual share of that collective Karma. We have seen already that mere disapproval or ignorance of what has led to that Karma does not liberate us from our share in it. Can we decline it by renouncing all advantages which our membership in the group gives us? If we could dissociate ourselves entirely from the group, we could probably escape our share of its Karma, but can we do it? Evidently not. All that we can do—and even that would require an almost superhuman will and energy—is to decide that we shall accept no *further* advantage accruing from our membership with the group. But we cannot get rid of what we have acquired already and made part and parcel of ourselves. We may give away money, but we cannot

shed the learning or the intelligence or the physical health which we have acquired in the course of years, thanks to the group and to its wealth, or even the spirituality which our group may have helped us to gain. Even if we should decide to make no further use of all those riches, we have acquired them, very likely as a consequence of some rather doubtful activities of the group. And what we have received and eaten we must pay for. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that illness is the rent we have to pay for occupying the body; we might say also that collective Karma is the rent we have to pay for membership in a group. Moving out of it does not free us from the obligation of paying the rent already fallen due.

We may, however, apply to our individual share of a collective Karma the same rules which are taught by all great masters in connection with individual Karma. We may for instance accept whatever good comes to us from our association with a group only with the intention of passing it on, of letting others have the benefit of it. And this attitude may be, to a certain extent, also retrospective in so far as we may decide to apply all that we have already acquired through our association with the group to the profit and advantage of less favourably situated fellow-beings. This will naturally be efficacious in proportion to the sincerity of the intention and the earnestness with which it is put into practice. But if we make that transmission an actual fact, we shall certainly be greatly helped in our endeavour to avoid accumulating a greater share of collective Karma and to get rid of that already taken on.

It would seem that one of the very simple rules of morals, that of restitution, might receive here a very important application. When we, as individuals, are conscious of having stolen something from somebody, restitution of the stolen thing to its rightful possessor seems to us a prerequisite for any future progress. And if the thing in question no longer exists, we feel that we should compensate the victim by giving him or her either some other thing of a corresponding value, both intrinsically and for the person concerned, or else all that we have gained through our unrighteous possession of the stolen object.

If we apply that principle to problems of collective Karma, we see that when a group to which we belong has acquired some wealth, of whatever sort it be, through spoliation or exploitation of other groups, or even individuals, our first duty is to return what has been stolen or unrighteously taken. And when that proves impossible—as will often be the case for very obvious reasons,—we should at least devote all that we have gained through the collective misdeed to the profit and advantage of the group which has been dispossessed of what it lawfully held. This seems to be the only way other than sheer suffering through which we can burn collective Karma already acquired.

It may be argued that all progress as we know it, more particularly in the realm of material wealth, standard of living, knowledge, technique, and even hygiene and health, can only be achieved through living in groups, and therefore, through actions which give rise to collective Karma—most of which is of a rather

undesirable character, as the means through which communities accumulate wealth and power fairly seldom answer the most elementary requirements of ethics. And it may be asked whether an effort to avoid building up more bad collective Karma would not put a stop to all “progress” and to the further development of the “civilisation” and “culture” of which some races are so proud and which other races envy so much.

It should be noted here that exactly the same arguments might be brought forward in the case of individual activity also. A robber might submit, for instance, that if he were to stop stealing he would no longer be able to support his family as well as he does, and that he would lose all hope of ever improving the condition of his wife and children. I suppose very few tribunals or moralists would conclude that the man should go on stealing. Why? Because in this case they feel that moral values should be given preference to material values. Similarly, in the case of collective activity, there seems to be very little doubt that spiritual and even moral values should have priority over physical, and even intellectual values. And if by renouncing unrighteous means of acquiring wealth of all sorts, a group sees its material, and even its intellectual, advancement somewhat retarded, that group would in all probability reap moral and spiritual progress which would more than outweigh what was lost on the other side.

One other point which we are likely to raise is that each one of us, as an individual, is not responsible for the general collective activity of the group, and has practically no power to alter it. We may say that what-

ever attitude one of us might take, would not affect the action of the group as a whole, nor its Karma. Although this is not entirely true, we may for the sake of argument admit that it is, because in most cases we do not see any appreciable effect of the action or attitude we have individually decided to adopt. But that is no reason why we should not as members of a group act according to the highest standards which we have adopted for our individual life. We are responsible not for the action or attitude of the group, which is entirely different from our own self, but for the orientation of the influence, however small, which we exert, on that group. And what happens afterwards is really no concern of ours. Too often the objection "*I can do nothing*" is raised only to cover and disguise another one which would be far more sincere: "*I do not want to do what I can do and what I know I should do.*"

It has not been my ambition in these few pages to say anything new, or even to give a new presentation of what so many people, in India especially, know so well. It may interest some Indians, however, to realise that there are now people in the West who are considering those problems under what is for them a new angle, and that the time may not be very

remote when seekers in the East and in the West will find there a common ground. My earnest hope is that the West will come to see these great problems in their true light—and take the necessary action—before it is called to account and made to suffer for the heavy Karma it has already accumulated.

P. S.—I am well aware that all problems of collective Karma might be viewed more easily, and perhaps more truly from the point of view of individual Karma. It may, and perhaps should, be held that the soul, when choosing a body into which to reincarnate, is naturally drawn to select one similar to those chosen by other souls which have similar Karma to burn. This would provide an explanation for those bodies herding together and making up families, nations, castes, &c., the various members of which have many tendencies and much Karma in common. This theory would make of collective Karma a kind of higher and more subtle heredity chosen by the soul just as the physical heredity of its new body. As I said at the outset, the theory of collective Karma as such, and as independent from individual Karma, is one of many ways of looking at the world, and its only value is that it may help us to see some problems more clearly or more easily.

KESHAB CHANDRA SEN

By S. K. Maitra, M.A., Ph.D.

[We have special pleasure in publishing this short article from the pen of the distinguished Professor about Sj. Keshab Chandra Sen, whose centenary has been celebrated recently throughout the land. As a fearless seeker of truth, a large-hearted lover of mankind, an unflinching reformer of social evils and as a mighty creative personality, Sj. Keshab Chandra Sen has won the homage of all Indians, even of those who

may remember him in the distant future. Great as he was, Keshab was one of the first to discover the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna and pass on the benefit of that discovery to his youthful, admiring hearers, and through them to the world. The intimate relation that existed between S^j. Keshab and Sri Ramakrishna was unique in its nature and effect, and as such the loving memory of these two great personalities cannot fade from the minds of the lovers and admirers of both.]

KESHAB was one of those giants of the nineteenth century, produced by the contact of the East and the West, who ushered in a spiritual renaissance in India similar to that of Europe in the sixteenth century. This spiritual renaissance had its origin in Rammohan Ray, the great seer who first revealed the soul of India to a generation that had almost completely lost sight of it. Yes, Rammohan Ray revealed to India her lost soul. It was, however, the soul of India which he revealed, not the outer coverings and excrescences that had grown round it and in great measure hid it. The soul of India is dynamic and not static; it is capable of reacting upon new influences and forces that the march of time continuously brings into being. It does not allow itself to be lost in the immense heap of customs and traditions which a long past has accumulated in the course of centuries. But it has got the power of rising above all these and recreating and renewing itself in response to the new conditions which the march of history brings in its train. This is what gives it its vitality; this is what gives it its dynamism; this is what makes it a soul. If it did not possess this, it might be anything else; but it certainly could not be called a soul. A soul always cries out for light. When our ancient Rishis said, "Lead me from the unreal to the Real; lead me from darkness to Light; lead me from death to Immortality," they expressed this

fundamental need of the soul for light, for growth, for expansion. Not to be able to seek light, not to be able to grow, is a sign of death. It was not the death of the body; but it was the far more terrible death—the death of the soul, which our sages sought to avoid, and it was this which impelled Maitreyi to say, "What shall I do with that which does not make me Immortal." She was not afraid of bodily death; she knew it for certain that the body would one day disintegrate. What she wanted to avoid at all cost was the death of the soul. And this she knew was only possible with the help of that knowledge which made her rise superior to desires and passions and the thirst for material goods. No other knowledge had any meaning for her, for she knew it was a passage from one death to another.

Rammohan Ray was true to this conception of the soul, and that is why he proved that the soul of India, instead of losing itself in the past, could raise itself above it and exhibit sufficient strength and vitality to cope with new and ever new conditions. How the soul of India could do this, how it could react upon the new light that was coming from the West,—to exhibit this was the life-work of Rammohan. And he did it so thoroughly that there was hardly any department of national life which did not receive a new awakening from him.

But Rammohan did it from the side of knowledge. Undoubtedly knowledge is a great spiritual force.

"There is nothing so pure and purifying as knowledge"—says the Bhagavad Gita. Especially, if a nation is to rise from a condition of total unconsciousness of itself to one of complete self-consciousness, it is knowledge that must show the way. But to say this is not the same as to say that knowledge alone enables us to recover our lost soul. In fact, to make knowledge the sole way to salvation would be to ignore the great work that has been done by art and religion. It is here that the work of Rammohan required to be supplemented.

And this requisite supplementation came at the right time and in right measure. For within three years of the death of Rammohan there were born three great sons of India—Ramakrishna, Bankim and Keshab—who, each in his own way, supplied the necessary corrective to the work of Rammohan. Bankim revealed the soul of India through his wonderful literary creations, Keshab and Ramakrishna did it through their gospel of love and universal brotherhood of man. There was also another link which connected these three great souls. They all stemmed the growing tide of irreverence and irreligion which had set in, ever since Rammohan gave his verdict in favour of Western education. The immediate effect of the introduction of Western education was a tremendous growth of the spirit of unbelief and scepticism, and it was one of the greatest services which all of them rendered to their motherland that they checked the growth of that spirit. But there was still another link that joined these great souls. Bankim's genius created not only new

models of literary art but it achieved something which was even more remarkable, namely, an ideal of love for one's country, as embodied in his immortal song *Vande Mataram* and his novel *Ananda Math*. Keshab's gospel of universal love differed only from Bankim's ideal of love in this, that it was not confined to his country but embraced the whole of mankind. Bankim saw the vision of his Mother in his country, Keshab saw it in the picture of mankind. Here we see the touch of Ramakrishna, under whose influence Keshab came very much during the last years of his life. It is indeed remarkable that from the year 1880 onwards, when Keshab used to spend much of his time in the company of Ramakrishna, it was this vision of the Mother which symbolised for him his ideal of love that was uppermost in his mind. And through this idea of the Mother he came to a point where all human distinctions vanished for him, and where he could gaze upon the whole of mankind as the living embodiment of the Divine Mother. This was the culminating point of his humanism, a point where humanity merged itself insensibly into Divinity. One step more, and we reach Ramakrishna's gospel of Service.

Indeed, if we glance at the history of the religious movement in India from Rammohan Ray to the end of the last century, we find three main currents running through it. The first current gives us a Religion of Knowledge according to which salvation is only possible through knowledge. Rammohan, Maharshi Devendranath and Dayananda may be regarded as representing this current, though in the last, it was joined to

an adherence to the ritualistic practices of the Vedas. The second great stream is the Religion of Love, of which the best representatives are Keshab and Ramakrishna. But Ramakrishna marks also the transition to the Religion of Service, the third main current in the religious movement of this period.

The most essential feature of Keshab's religious views was his faith in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. With the exception of Sri Ramakrishna, no religious teacher in India in modern times laid so much stress as Keshab did upon the absolute equality of men. So also no one, with the exception of Rammohan and Ramakrishna, was so catholic in his religious outlook as he. For him every path was good that led to God. He had great reverence for the personality and teachings of Christ, and this made many of his contemporaries take him to be a Christian, just as Rammohan's great regard for the precepts of Jesus led many people to think that he was a Christian. In reality, both these religious leaders occupied a universal standpoint where all distinctions, such as those of Hindu, Mussalman and Christian, were lost.

Keshab's conception of God was that of a personal God, or as he preferred to call it, "a living God of Providence." As I have already said, he looked upon God as Mother. The message of God which he asked his followers to proclaim ran as follows: "Go and proclaim Me, Mother

of India. Many are ready to worship Me as their Father. But they know not that I am their Mother too—tender, indulgent, forbearing, forgiving, always ready to take back the penitent child. Yes, all go forth from city to city and from village to village, singing My mercies and proclaiming to all men that I am India's Mother."

Keshab's activities were not confined to the religious sphere. He was a great educationist, a born fighter and a zealous champion of social reform. He achieved great fame also as a journalist, as the remarkable ability with which he conducted the *Indian Mirror* and the *Sulabha Samachar* testifies.

No account of Keshab is complete which does not mention his remarkable gift of speech. His oratory had something almost divine about it. No orator of modern times, with the possible exception of Vivekananda, produced such an impression upon his audience as Keshab did. His whole personality used to melt into his speeches, and that gave them their extraordinary appeal.

Blessed is the land that could produce in the same century and within a few years of one another, a Keshab, a Bankim and a Ramakrishna! They were all great souls, animated by the same burning humanism. But while the humanism of Bankim poured out in the form of his passionate love for his motherland, that of Keshab and Ramakrishna showed itself in a universal love of mankind.

SAINT KABIR AND HIS MYSTIC GOSPEL

By Sheo Narayan Lal Srivastava, M.A.

[Professor Srivastava's informing article on Kabir, besides affording delightful reading to the religious-minded, forms again another reminder to the modern India riven with Hindu-Muslim strife that the only solution for the problem lies in a real understanding and practising of the essence of Islam and Hinduism as exemplified in the life of the great saint.]

I

IN the shining galaxy of the saints of medieval India, Kabir occupies a unique place. His lofty message, proclaiming the sublimest heights of mystical realization and Divine communion, and lifting man above all parochial limits of castes and creeds, sects and denominations, doctrines and dogmas, is all the more significant for us to-day, confronted as we are with the supreme task of reconciling warring communities and false religious ideologies that are so common at present. Kabir's message has a universal appeal, and has the sanction of living spiritual experience.

Kabir was a humble man born of poor Muslim parents who were weavers (*Julaha*) by profession. There are various legends about the birth of Kabir which are obviously too fanciful to be reckoned true. It is said that Kabir, being the very embodiment of the Eternal Spirit, was never born of mortal parents. The Supreme Being himself in a sportive mood assumed the form of a child and was found floating upon a lotus in the lake of Lahari-talao near Benares by a Muslim weaver couple who took home the child and brought him up. Hindu writers who are interested in concealing the fact of Kabir's Muslim parentage give out that, though brought up in a Muslim family, Kabir was a Brahmin by birth. Such legendary and false ac-

counts, however, mar and not enhance, the real glory of Kabir's humble life. The very name of Kabir indicates his Muslim parentage and the fact that he was a *Julaha* or weaver finds ample corroboration in his own sayings as well in those of his disciple Dadu. Be as it may, why bother about this controversy? Was not Kabir himself high above all sectarian bias and one with universal humanity? In his own words he disavows himself being either a Hindu or a Muslim:

"To style myself a Hindu is not proper, nor to style myself a Mussalman ;

Lo! this is only a toy-machine of the five elements within which is sporting the Invisible Person."¹

Scholars are divided in their opinion about the dates of Kabir's birth and death. According to the author of the *Kabir-kasanti*, Kabir died in 1518. He is said to have been born in 1398 and to have lived to his 120th year. Kabir led the humble life of a weaver and maintained his livelihood by selling in the market the products of his loom. With him there was no unbridgeable chasm between worldly life and the life spiritual. Though initiated into spiritual life, he was married, his wife's name being Loi.

¹ हिन्दू कहूँ तो मैं नहीं, मुसलमान भी नाहि ।
पाँच तत्व का पूतला, गैबी खेले माहि ॥

He had two children, a son named Kamal and a daughter named Kamali. Kamal himself was a Bhakta and a poet of a very high order and has written poems of marvellous beauty. Kamali is said to have been married to a Brahmin husband.

Kabir was initiated into the spiritual life by Ramananda, a follower of Sri Ramanuja. Being an illiterate all his life, Kabir himself never wrote anything. Deep and spirited utterances (Vani) gushed out spontaneously from the depths of his mystical realisations, and these were recorded by his close disciples and followers. "Never did I touch," says Kabir, "ink or paper, nor did I ever take pen in hand. Orally have I delivered all my knowledge of the four Yugas."² The utterances of Kabir are remarkable for the intrepid boldness of his convictions, the sweetness and grace of language, as well as for their poetic beauty and suggestiveness. Kabir is both a saint and a poet of the first magnitude.

II

We shall now give here a brief account of Kabir's gospel of the true spiritual life and of the path leading up to it. Kabir had no sympathy with those who thought that leading a spiritual life was a task easy enough for everybody. He railed against all those who complacently believed that the observance of certain external ceremonies and practices and the assent to creeds and dogmas was the be all and the end all of spiritual life. To the erring multitude, he proclaimed aloud that

² 'मसि कागद छया नहीं, कटम गही नहीं हाथ ।
चारौ गुण महातेम, (कबिर) मुखहि जनाई बात ॥

real spiritual life is no cheap affair, but an earnest and strenuous struggle after purity and holiness culminating in the experience of Truth, which is incommunicable and far beyond the doctrines and dissensions of wrangling seekers. This Inexpressible Truth, says Kabir, is hard to realise; no one reaches It in a moment. It is revealed only to the pure and the simple-hearted who have achieved riddance from all vain wranglings and doubts and from all clinging to dogmas.³ It is only the illumined souls, the *seers of Truth*, who are really competent to speak about It, and to guide the spiritual life of the people. "He who speaks about that domain (of the Spirit) without having *seen it*," says Kabir, "is wicked. He is like the man who has himself only tasted salt, but goes about selling camphor."⁴ How often do vainglorious teachers and preachers of Truth make a travesty of It by describing It in all manner of words. Truth in Its real essence, says Kabir, is ever inexpressible: "Every one glibly talks about the Truth, but is not Truth impersonal and incommunicable? It ever eludes the grasp of the tongue (speech); *perceive* It and ascertain if it is not so."⁵

Below I give an English translation of one of the most sublime utterances of Kabir, wherein he speaks about Truth as It is realized in the highest reach of mystical experience—

³ यह तो गति है अटपटी, चटपट लखे न कोय ।
जो मन की खटपट मिटै, चटपट दरसन होय ॥

⁴ बिन देखै वह देस की, बात कहे सो कूर ।
आपुहि खारी खात है, बेचत फिर कपूर ॥

⁵ सन्द सन्द सब कोइ कहै, वो तो सन्द बिदेह ।
जिम्हा पर आवे नहीं, निरखि परखि करि लेह ॥

a realization which silences all doctrinal disputes :

“O ye learned men, vain your disputations!

Creation there is not, nor Creator is there,

Nor gross substance, nor subtle, nor wind, nor fire,

There the sun shines not, nor the moon; earth and water exist not.

Time, all-illuminating, exists not there, there is no speech or body,

Work or duty there is none, of hymn or worship no need ;

Of thought discursive no trace is there,

Wherefore call It One or Dual?”

The quintessence of Kabir's teachings is thus summed up in his own words: “Kindliness to all living beings and adoration of the supreme Self—there is nothing (no god) worthy of adoration equal to these.”⁶ To Hindus and Muslims who are fighting over the name of God and who think that they have their separate religions opposed to each other, Kabir says:

“How could you have, O brethren, two Gods? Tell me who has misled you? As in the different ornaments made of gold the same gold is there, so also the differing names of God—Allah, Ram, Kareem, Keshava, Hari and Hazrat—refer to the same Being. Nimaz and Puja are only seemingly two different things, but essentially identical. You call upon the same God whether you have on your lips the name of Mahadeva or Muhammad, Brahma or Adam. Inhabitants of the same soil, wherefore divide

yourselves by labelling yourselves Hindus and Muslims?”

Like all the great religious teachers of the world, Kabir was a vigorous awakener of souls, ever exhorting mankind to rise up beyond the realm of Maya to an unclouded awareness of the eternal Self. In the mystical philosophy of Kabir, the concept of Maya has a central place. Life here on earth is an error and a delusion because of the devastating influence of Maya. The upward ascent of man, from self-forgetting to self-knowledge, is a grim struggle against the wiles and allurements of Maya. In a beautiful simile Kabir likens Maya to a mysterious woman “come into this world without having had a father or a mother. She has neither legs nor a head nor a body; yet, the entire world is deluded by her.”⁷ That is, we cannot trace the origin of Maya (the unreal cannot be derived from the Real) nor can we ascribe any reality to it; yet the deluded world takes the Mayic creation to be real and acts up to that belief. Jiva and Isvara are both, says Kabir, the products of Maya. There is a fine saying of his in this connection. “A river bursts through a mountain rock and spreads its waters in all the four directions. In these waters two mountains were drowned, and the entire river appeared as but a wave (in the infinite ocean of Brahman).”⁸ The idea underlying these metaphors is that from the mountain-rock of *Brahman*, emerged the river of

7 नारि एक संसारहि आई, माय न वाके आपहि जाई ।
गोढ़ न मूढ़ न प्राण-अचारा, तामहँ भमरि रहइ
संसारा ॥

8 पाहन फोरि गंग एक निकरी, चहुँ दिसि पानो पानी ।
तिहि-पानी डुइ परबत बूढ़े, दरिया लहर समानी ॥

6 “जीव दया अर अत्तम पूजा ।
इन्ह सम केन अवर नहि दूजा ॥”

Maya; and in this river of Maya the two mountains *viz.*, Jiva and Isvara were drowned, that is, both are conditioned by Maya. And yet, to the beholder of Brahman the immensity of the Mayic creation appears as but nothing when compared to the immensity of Brahman. The entire creation of Maya appears only like a wave in the infinite ocean of Brahman. There are numerous utterances of Kabir in which the theory of an all-enveloping cosmic nescience is poignantly put forth and a stirring appeal to rise above it and awake into the effulgent realm of Divine essence, is made. Again and again, Kabir reiterates his conviction that it is this "higher wakefulness" alone which is the essential thing in the truly religious or spiritual life. Kabir was a mystic, pure and simple. He read the open Book of Life and expressed in the language of the masses the truths of his direct experience. Mystic experience has a wide range and comprehends a variety of grades within it. The two most salient grades of mystic experience are (i) the state of communion and loving fellowship with the Divine, and (ii) the state of complete mergence of individuality into Divinity. Kabir's experience embraced both these phases of mysticism. He takes the latter phase as the last rung of the ladder of mystic experience and compares it to the dissolving of a doll of salt in the ocean water. Most of his sayings, however, breathe an air of intense devotion and describe in sweet and poetic language the state of communion and fellowship with the Divine.

Kabir hated alike the formalism of both the Hindus and the Muslims,

and was anxious to lead both to the path of true spirituality. In denouncing the pretensions of a false religiosity, he spares neither the Mussalman Quazi nor the Hindu Brahmin (Pandey). His biting polemics against the soul-killing formalism of these so-called religious leaders can be properly enjoyed and appreciated only when they are read in the original. There is a story current that when on the occasion of the Sradhha ceremony of Ramananda, the other disciples of the master came to Kabir for milk, Kabir approached a dead cow and begged for milk. When asked why he behaved in this strange manner, Kabir replied that a dead cow's milk would be a fit drink for a dead person. Kabir's uncompromising denunciation of all cult of externalism in spiritual life is typically exemplified in his sarcastic caricature of the telling of the rosary: "The rosary moves in the hand, the tongue moves in the mouth, and the mind moves in all the ten directions. Well, this is no communion with God. Turning the rosary of the wood, sayeth Kabir, is an affair of much (fruitless) caution. Throw away, therefore, the rosary of thy hand and turn the inward rosary of thy mind."⁹ Inwardness is the very bee in the bonnet of Kabir's credo of spiritual life. True Bhakti, he tells us, is of the heart alone; and this is exceedingly rare and difficult. "The door way of Bhakti," he says, "is as narrow as one-tenth part of a mustard seed. How can the mind

१ माला तो कर में फिरे, जीम फिरे मुक्त मांदि ॥
मनुष्य तो बहिरि फिरे, यह तो दुमिरन नाहि
कबीर माला काठ की, बहुत जतन का फेर ।
कर का मनका डारकर, मन का मनका फेर ।

which has assumed the dimensions of an inebriate elephant pass through it?" Like all great mystics of the world Kabir teaches that one can never attain true spiritual felicity unless he becomes "dead" to all sense attractions of the outer world. This is what he calls "dying before death." "Better than living," he says, "is dying, if one only knows what dying really is. Whoever becomes dead (to the sense world) before his death (i.e., the fall of the body) becomes immune to old age and attains immortality."¹⁰ Again, "When thou rememberest God, do so with all thy heart wholly set on Him. Let thy mouth speak no words. Shut all outward doors (the doors of the senses) and let open the door within."

III

We shall now give here some of the beautiful sayings of Kabir on diverse topics of interest to the spiritual aspirant. It is not possible to give within the compass of a short article like this an exhaustive account of the manifold teachings of Kabir. It is however hoped that what has been written above together with the quotations given below will give the readers a fairly adequate idea of the great mystic's credo. Regarding the remembrance of God, Kabir says:

"Set thy heart on thinking of God as intently as the worm (*Kita*) that thinks of the bee (*Bhramara*) and forgetting itself eventually transform itself into the bee."

"Take up the remembrance of God as intently as fish takes to water.

Separate the fish from the water and in a moment it dies, so much is its dependence upon water."

"Have that intensity of devotion to God which the moth has for the flame. In a single moment it burns itself to death, and shrinks not its body while burning."

"Be as careful in remembering God as a poor man is careful in preserving his guinea, of which he is never unmindful and sees every moment that it is not lost."

"One should have such a fixity of attention in his constant remembrance of God as the woman carrying water has on the pot (*Gagar*) over her head. She moves and shakes her body as she walks along, but her attention is ever fixed on balancing the pot over her head."

"One should have such an ever-present remembrance of God as the mother-cow has of her calf. She goes out agazing hither and thither, but is all the time thinking of her calf left at home." "The path of devotion to God, as taught by the Sadguru, is easy enough. If only thou rememberest the Lord every time thou exhaledst or inhaledst in thy breathing, the Lord shall surely some day meet thee."

Regarding truthfulness, Kabir says the following:

"Clad in the mantle of love, Kabir is dancing and proclaiming that he is prepared to dedicate his body and mind to him who speaks the truth."

"O man! be truthful first, for the Lord loveth truthfulness. After thou hast become truthful, have any appearance which pleaseth thee. Let thy hairs be long or let thy head be shaven, it matters not."

"The true Sadhu should always speak the truth, whether it causes

¹⁰ जीवन ते मरना भला, जो मरि जाने कोय ।
मरने पहिले जो मरे, तो अजरामर होय ॥

others to be his friends or his enemies."

Regarding contentment, Kabir says: "There is wealth in the form of cows, there is wealth in the form of elephants and horses, and there is wealth in the form of treasures of gold. But when there is the wealth of contentment, all other wealth is as dust before it."

"Lord! Give me only so much wealth as will suffice for my family. I want just enough to save me from starvation and to be able to feed visiting Sadhus."

"Best of all is the Madhukari alms, made as it is of various kinds of corns. No one person can claim it, this is verily sovereignty without a kingdom."

Regarding forgiveness Kabir says thus: "Where there is kindness, there is *dharma*; where there is greed, there is sin; where there is anger, there is death; and where there is forgiveness, there is the Lord Himself."

Regarding kindness to animals, Kabir says: "Why be kind to some animals and cruel to others? Are not all animals, the biggest like the elephant as well as the smallest like the ant, creatures of the same Lord?" Kabir was full of tender kindness for all animals of the lower creation, and he regarded killing them for food as stark cruelty.

About an ideal Sadhu Kabir says: "A Sadhu should be one who neither himself feels the onslaught of life nor

does he give pain to others. He should live in this world like one living in a garden without having anything to do with its flowers and plants."

"The Sadhus should live in this world like lotuses in water, or like the nurse of a child who suckles and fondles the babe knowing all the time that it does not belong to her."

"If you meet a true Sadhu it is as good as meeting the Lord Himself; for in his thoughts, words and deeds, the Sadhu is a faultless prototype of the Lord."

"That which can mirror forth the Invisible Divine, is the person of the Sadhu. If, therefore, you want to see the Invisible, see It as mirrored in the Sadhus."

Kabir laid a great stress on the company of true and holy Sadhus for the deepening of the spiritual life.

Such are some of the teachings of this great saint of medieval India who is remarkable for his out-spoken denunciation of all cant formalism and meaningless practices that are done in the name of religion. An interesting episode marks the close of his glorious life. From his boyhood onwards Kabir had been living in Benares (Kashi) where dying, according to orthodox Hindu belief, brings one salvation. In order to vindicate the meaninglessness of such a belief Kabir shortly before his death, moved to another place called Maghar where he died.

THE FOUNDATION OF HINDU CULTURE

By K. Guru Dutt

(Continued from previous issue.)

[Culture implies perfecting of human personality: civilisation, perfecting of human instruments. The social and religious aspirations of the Hindu race always had the former as the impelling motive behind, even to the neglect of the latter accomplishment, in which the West has excelled. This, however, has saved the soul of India. The author of this paper brings to our attention these points with scholarly ability. Mr. Guru Dutt is a distinguished officer of Mysore Civil Service and a keen student of religion.]

IV

The old Indian culture seems to have been very much concerned with direct experience without the intermediacy of material things as far as possible. Material things were used, but as symbols. Thus fire was tended not so much because it could melt the metals and cook food; but rather because Fire was a symbol of God, through which man could have direct access to the inner regions of his consciousness, or shall we say, unconsciousness? By contemplating on Him, regions of experiences of which man is ordinarily unaware, were brought within his ken. It was Fire that led man by the true path, to bliss and enjoyment. Agni was aware of all his acts, and He destroyed that crookedness which is in man and is called sin. This is what is meant by the prayer which we find in the *Isa Upanishad*, 18: "Guide us, O Agni, by the road of bliss to enjoyment, O God Who knowest all acts. Destroy our crooked sin that we may offer thee our best salutations." The worshipper contemplated the sun not as a mass of incandescent gas, but rather as Pushan: he who nourished life. Thus he addressed him: "O Pushan who with thy golden disc has covered up the face of Truth, uncover it so that I who am intent on Satya

and Dharma may be vouchsafed thy vision." (*Ibid.* 15). There is ample evidence that these prayers were answered. There is the ring of truth and authenticity in the utterances in which the declarations were made. Thus the Rishi has cried in exultation: "We have drunk the Soma; we have become immortal; we have reached the light; we have found Gods. What can hostility now do to us, and what the malice of mortal man, O Immortal one?" (*Rigveda* viii:48.3). Again another Rishi has exclaimed: "I have realised this great Being Who shines effulgent like the sun beyond all darkness." (*Svetasvatara Up.* iii.8).

The process by which these results were achieved was called Yajna, as we have already seen. Yajna functioned in the region of experience known as Rita which may also be called Adhidaiva. On the one side was the purely physical inanimate Cosmos of which visible space, infinitely divisible, was the manifestation, and on the other was the subjective self in man, one and indivisible. They are the Adhibhuta and the Adhyatma. Both are recognised by us moderns; but for us there is no link between them. But ancient Indian Culture possessed the link between these two; and that was the region of the Adhidaiva

where the infinite variety of the external world and the unity of the inner world were subtly blended together, as in man's personality. That is what is meant by the statement Purusha is Adhidaivata with which we started. It is in this region that Yajna was effective. Man attuned himself to the physical universe and he attained such harmony with it that he could say without untruth 'from Yajna arises rain'. The creation of the universe itself has been pictured as a cosmic Yajna in that celebrated hymn of the Rigveda called the Purushasukta (R. V. x.90.16).'

V

Yajna was an experimental method and it was successful. A reputed scientific writer, Dr. George Sarton, has said rather complacently: "The great intellectual division of mankind is not along geographical or racial lines, but between those who understand and practise the experimental method and those who do not understand and do not practise it." But if asked what the experimental method is, he would reply perhaps that

'The primeval Purusha is described therein as thousand-headed, thousand-eyed and thousand-footed, as enveloping the world on all sides then extending beyond it. Purusha is all this, whatever has been and will be. He is the lord of immortality, yet it is he who takes food and grows beyond mortality. Such is his greatness. A fourth of him is all beings and three-fourths of him are what is immortal in heaven. There was a symbolical Yajna in which this Purusha divided himself into this ordered universe, animate and inanimate. Thus was the sacrifice established by the Devas. Thus order was introduced into chaos; the apparently inanimate forces of the universe reached godhead and became accessible to realisation.

it consists in mixing potassium chlorate and manganese di-oxide and heating them with a view to getting oxygen. So it is, but the case is purely Adhibhoutika or material. The experimental method could be applied to the subtler regions also, viz. to the Adhidaivika. Such experimental methods were Yoga and Yajna. What shall we say of those that refuse to understand or practise them, before judging them and stigmatising them as superstition and magic? A favourable attitude and sympathy will surely bring in their train and in good time, the requisite understanding and perhaps practice. Yajna will then no longer be thought of as something alien to man, but rather as twin born with him, by which he thrives and attains his ends, namely, the Purusharthas (chief values of life). The truth will then be realised of the assertions in the Bhagavadgita III:10 and 12.

VI

The ideal of Yajna has no doubt degenerated; and this must be due to the preponderance of Anrita (the power opposed to the right and the good) over Rita (the power for the right and the good). The vicissitudes of these two forces graphically described in our literature reads to us a greater cultural lesson. In the Brahmanas it has been said: Vishnu verily is Yajna, and, as we know, Vishnu goes to sleep for long periods. At such times Anrita, which is the antithesis of Rita, prevails. Yajna is done, but the offerings are snatched away by the Asuras and the Rakshasas. These Asuras are close kinsmen of the Devas. The Devas and Asuras are represented in our mythology as

fighting all the time with each other and with varied success. Sometimes the Gods prevailed and sometimes the Asuras. The Gods are those wholesome and rounded tendencies in man, which conduce to his realisation of all the Purusharthas. On the contrary the Asuras are hypertrophied tendencies in which some faculty or aspect is allowed to grow at the expense of the others. There is always a growth of power in one direction coupled with atrophy in others. Shall we say that the Asuras are bloated specialists and reckless record-breakers? For example there was Ravana with ten heads. What could this signify but exaggeration of brain power? It is said that Kabandha was all arms and no body, and that he grabbed everything which came within his grasp for a distance of seven leagues (yojanas). What is this but greed personified and exaggerated? All these were destroyed by the touch of Sri Rama who is described as the embodiment of harmony and comeliness: *Aryas sarvasamas caiva sadaika priya darsanah*. Rama prevailed in the long run, although he had his bad days when he lived as an exile in the forest, and his wife was captured and taken away by Ravana. This would be a good allegorical description of the course of Indian culture, and no true Indian will hesitate about his allegiance. But in the meantime it will be remembered that Ravana had defeated the Devas and kept them all in bondage, and the Rakshasas were fattening on the oblations intended for the Gods. It should not be thought that the Asuras were averse to Yajna. No, on the contrary they were very anxious that Yajna should be performed; but in their honour, and not in the

service of the Gods. After all it should not be forgotten that Yajna was only the means like Tapas and Yoga. Ravana as well as many, in fact all the Asuras, were great Tapasvins (ascetics) and Yogis. But by their asceticism and Yoga they did not desire the growth of Rita but of Anrita. It is said that the Rakshasas used even the Vedas for their own purpose like the devil quoting scripture. They were Brahmarakshasas. Thus when Hanuman went to Lanka on his first trip, it is described that in the dead of night he heard the holy chanting of the Brahmarakshasas who were experts in all the six auxiliaries of the Vedas and who had performed the greatest sacrifices.

The Bhagavadgita (XVI.3) says that the divine qualities lead to freedom while the demonic qualities lead to bondage. The former go along the line of surrender, along the channels of the cosmic Prana: Indra and Indriya. On the other hand the Asuras are the deadly enemies of Indra. They are compact of egoism or Ahan-kara, and they lead on from glamour to glamour into veritable orgies of futile and destructive action. "With vain hopes, with futile actions, with the semblance of knowledge, and devoid of sense they take refuge in the delusive nature of Rakshasas and Asuras." (*Ibid* IX.12). Whether we follow the Devas or the Asuras is not so much a matter of choice as of nature, Svabhava. But for those for whom choice is possible, the Devas and Asuras have first to be recognised before any choice could be made and this recognition is no easy matter. It is said that the Devas love the indirect approach: *Paroksha priya vai devah*. They are not Pratyaksha,

perceptible. As for the Asuras they are said to be Kamarupins, protean. They assume what shape they please at will. Surpanakha assumed a lovely shape and tried to inveigle Sri Rama. Maricha assumed the shape of a golden deer and Ravana that of a holy Sannyasi. We must see through the forms before we make the choice. That is the significance of the oft-repeated statement in the ancient Hindu books that the path of Dharma is indeed Sukshma or subtle.

VII

To sum up: Let it not be thought that unauthorised use of the word culture is made here. It has been said at the outset that Indian culture is identical with the Dharma. There is also another word which could be equated with it, and that is Sampat. Sampat does not consist of material goods, but of experience which is Sukshma. I have tried to differentiate between the Daivi-sampat and the Asuri-sampat. With this object I have tried to show the common ground between the oldest

document of Indian culture and a more modern and universally popular one, which may well be called a manual of Indian Culture. I mean the Rigveda and the Bhagavadgita. They might be deemed the Old and New Testaments of India. I am not criticising any alien culture or civilisation. It is not that any culture is wholly 'divine' or 'demonic'. It is mostly a question of tendencies. There can be no denying that the ruling tendencies of Indian Culture have been 'divine'. That is the conclusion we get from the Itihasas and the Puranas. The Ramayana shows the victory of the 'divine' tendencies over the obviously 'demonic'. The Mahabharata shows the ultimate triumph of Dharma and his brothers over the camouflaged Asuras: Duryodhana and his brood. The embodied Purusha and the Supreme Purusha, Nara and Narayana, Arjuna and Sri Krishna—they should never be separated one from the other. Where they are joined together will be found all the elements of a glorious culture: wealth and success, welfare and morality, everlasting.

(Concluded.)

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

In the last Sutra we have seen how steadiness and unbroken continuity is necessary in spiritual practice. In the next Sutra, Narada gives an answer to a plausible objection that

may be levelled against this requirement. The objection may be stated thus: However necessary and advisable it might be to spend one's whole time in spiritual practices, one can-

not avoid spending some time at least in meeting such innocent demands of the body as that of food, sleep, physical cleanliness and the like, which even a realised man cannot escape. Again, so long as one remains a member of a certain social group, one has to discharge one's social obligations and adjust oneself to the requirements of that group in matters of diet, behaviour, etiquette, taboos, customs and the rest. When Bhagavan says in the Gita III:25 that even the realised man must actively participate in bringing about the welfare of society, how can a novice escape from it? It would thus seem impracticable to spend the whole time in spiritual practices alone: and a break in the continuity is inevitable when one is obliged to attend to such things. As against this doubt Narada says that such continuity is still possible and practicable as the mind can continue to meditate on God and His blessed attributes, even when one is occupied with such obligatory duties, through the aid of Sravana and Kirtana.

लोकेपि भगवद्गुणश्रवणकीर्तनात् ॥ ३७ ॥

लोके while engaged in the ordinary activities of life अपि even भगवद्गुणश्रवणकीर्तनात् by hearing and singing the glories of the Lord even while engaged in the ordinary activities of life.

*Note 1. By hearing and singing—*Spiritual practice mainly consists in the purification of the mind; and this can be best effected, according to the Bhaktisastra, by constant association with the Lord in one's own heart. Bhagavata VII:1.31 advises one to establish the Lord in one's own heart

either by hook or by crook. Again in XI:13, 14 *ib* Bhagavan himself says that the essence of Yoga consists in withdrawing the mind from sensual objects and concentrating it on God. In XI:14. 27 *ib* and Gita II:62 Bhagavan gives the reason also. The mind, it is pointed out, abhors a vacuum. It must think of something or other. If it does not think of God, the devil will take His place. It has the peculiar property of getting the colour and fragrance of the object with which it is in contact. If it meditates on sensual objects, it becomes worldly; and if it meditates on God, it becomes devoted to God. Hence meditation or constant, continued remembrance is the essence of spiritual practice. All spiritual practices involve this.

Now it is a psychological fact that the mind cannot think except in words and sentences. Thinking is nothing but speaking to oneself. The two are intimately connected with each other, as Kalidas points out in the first verse of Raghuvamsa. Meditation being nothing else than an unbroken stream of thought, it must necessarily be accompanied and supported by an unbroken series of images,—visual or auditory, constituted of words and sentences if it be of the latter type—which help one to remind oneself of God, on the psychological principle of association of ideas. This employment of language in support of meditation is here referred to under the expression Sravana and Kirtana. These two are not separate. The one involves the other. If one must hear, one must speak; and if one speaks, one cannot refuse to hear. Thus Sravana and Kirtana are complementary to each other. Both speaking and hear-

ing may be done either by the same person or different persons; it does not matter. It may also be either external, with the aid of the external senses, or internal, with the aid of the internal senses. Thus in silent meditation also a kind of mental Kirtana and Sravana is going on, only the speaker and the hearer are the same. These verbal helps take various forms. Sometimes it may take the form of study and exposition of scriptures. At other times, in composing or singing songs of praise, or prayer, or in the production of religious literature. Thus we have the story of Vyasa himself engaging in the composition of the Bhagavata under the instruction of Narada, and Suka engaging in reciting it to Parikshit. Often it may consist only in the repetition of various Mantras. It is only this last form of repetition of Mantras that forms the highest help to meditation. Such repetition is known as Japa. This Japa is so important that Bhagavan says in the Gita X:25 that he is himself the Japa-yajna among the spiritual practices. Manu says in II:87 that a man can attain realisation by Japa alone without the help of any other practice. In the introduction to the Vishnu-sahasra-nama we read of Bhishma's advice to Yudhisthira that Japa is the best of all religious practices; and in commenting on this, Sankara points out that its superiority is based on its freedom from dependence on any other particular ob-

ject or time or place or other requirements, as well as the fact that no injury (Himsa) is involved in it as in other Yajnas. It is also superior because, while other Yajnas are not available to certain Persons (like the Sudras or Sannyasis) Japa-yajna can be performed by all at all times and at all places. In the Vishnu-purana, it is stated that whatever spiritual effect is produced by Dhyana (meditation) in Krita-yuga, by Yajna in Treta-yuga and by formal worship in Dvapara-yuga, all these effects are obtained in Kali-yuga by mere Sankirtana. There is another advantage, according to the Brahmandapurana, in the repetition of the Lord's name: it doesn't stand in need of any special instruction (Updesa) from anybody. One can take to it oneself. The Brahma-vaivarta-purana also says: "All the practices, prescribed in the Srutis, which are hemmed in by all kinds of rules and restrictions cannot be done by all. Therefore by giving up such practices and merely repeating the name of God, one attains everything." Patanjali also refers to the importance of Japa in Sutra I:28, 29. The Rig-vedic Mantra says, "Desirous of obtaining realisation, I take Thy Name." The efficacy of hearing and uttering the name of God (Sravana and Sankirtana) is elaborately dealt with in the Bhagavata-purana (*vide* X:90.49 & 50, XII:4.40, II:1.5, I:5.22, III:25.25 & 26, XI:3.31, XII:12. 47-65 and others).

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Sabara-Bhashya Vol. I & II. Translated into English by Mm. Dr. Ganganath Jha. Published as Nos. 46 & 70 of the Gackwad's Oriental Series under the authority of the Government of H. H. the Maharaja Gackwad of Baroda. Price Rs. 16 each vol. Pages 1416. Copies to be had of the Oriental Institute, Baroda.

The purport and scope of Mimamsa are defined by Kumarila Bhatta thus: "The object of Mimamsa is the exposition of Dharma; it is based on many other sciences—*dharmakhyam vishayam vaktum mimamsayah prayojanam, mimamsakhyatu vidyeyam bahu vidyantarasrila.*" In another place the same authority says: "When the Veda is taken as the guarantor of rightly knowing Dharma, Mimamsa points out its mode of operation—*dharme pramiyamane hi vedena karanatmana, iti kartavyata-bhagam mimamsa purayisyati.*" If grammar analyse the words of the Veda, Mimamsa brings out the syntactic meaning of it. But it is not merely hermeneutics; it is also a system of philosophy that has a development of over 2,000 years. Mimamsa is the grammar of Vedic ritualism, an independent science of interpretation that has profoundly influenced Hindu Law and literature, and a system of philosophy that has shaped some other systems in certain vital points. If the Smritis may be considered the codified laws and the Nibandhas case law, the Mimamsa represents the legal maxims. Thus the science of Mimamsa in its general principles has a very wide field to operate, and its study from all points of view is highly valuable at the present day. Mimamsa terminology has permeated not only philosophy but even poetics (Alamkara) and general exposition in any subject. No one is considered competent to interpret the ancient texts unless he is profoundly erudite in the Pada, Vakya and Pramana; grammar, Mimamsa and logic. The technique of Mimamsa is a highly rational and scientific subject for study and affords good training in scientific thinking.

The earliest text of Mimamsa known at present is the Sutras of Jaimini; but it

is started much earlier than him as he himself mentions several other names of high authority in several places. Jaimini composed 2737 aphorisms in 12 chapters and 60 sections (Pada) which contain 914 Adhikaranas or Topics of Discussion. Fragments of the scholia by one Upavarsha or Vrttikara is the earliest work now known on the Sutras. But in extant and importance Sabara-Bhashya, which is about 2,000 years old, is the foremost. The Bhashyas of Sabara and Patanjali have supplied the pattern for all later writers who have attempted that type of expository writing. The penetrative analysis of the subject and the literary force and expressiveness have made these Bhashyas literary monuments of early Sanskrit literature. Sabara's Bhashya is a mine of knowledge that has a great historical and cultural value. Its fertility is evident from the threefold efflorescence of Mimamsa through Kumarila, Prabhakara and Murari in later times. For a mastery of the whole of Mimamsa Sabara-bhashya must necessarily be studied by any student.

A readable and accurate translation of such a great work was a desideratum which is now eminently fulfilled. Dr. Ganganath Jha is a prince among translators. Posterity has been bound to him with the bond of gratitude for the magnificent translations he has supplied within the last several decades. This, his latest work, which is a marvellous tribute to his industry, patience, profound scholarship and deep and disinterested love of learning, is an example of the highly laudable longing he has to uphold the past cultural achievements of the Motherland to the enlightened world. It has certainly made his name memorable in the history of Sanskrit learning. The success of the achievement is also due in no small measure to the magnificent liberality of the foremost royal patron of learning and culture in India, the Gackwad of Baroda. It is common knowledge that cultural renaissance more than once is preceded by the translation and interpretation of ancient works. Europe after the

'dark ages' and China after the advent of Buddhism furnish us examples as to what role the translations have played in shaping the religion and philosophy of these countries. The lively interest taken in Indian Philosophy and religion outside India and in our own academic circles, is much due to the English translations that are produced in galore in recent times. The impetus such translations have given to thought is really significant. Although the common run of man who hardly goes beyond the narrow pragmatic interests of life would not appreciate, people who value thought life will certainly appreciate the value of such endeavours. In this connection the opinion may be ventured that an accurate English translation of these texts have a marked advantage over the vernacular translation (although they too are absolutely necessary to bring the ideas to everyone) in as much as English possesses an abundantly rich vocabulary and variety of constructions capable of bringing out precisely and clearly the subtle ideas enshrined in the flexible Sanskrit terms, without importing those very terms, and in as much as English has a dominating tendency towards rigorous logic and precision gained through its long usage for scientific purposes. That an English translation would repel the mystic and ignorant awe that has sepulchered several ancient texts, and lay bare their real worth to be understood and utilised by the modern mind is another great consideration. The general plan and accuracy of this highly readable translation, which is throughout attractively presented with ample elucidatory material culled from other authoritative sources, make these volumes a welcome asset to every library that claims to represent Indian culture. We heartily express our deep appreciation for this monumental product which no scholar could afford to neglect. A word in apology is needed for the unusual delay that was accidentally caused in bringing out this review. But a belated review, in no way could belittle the permanent value and supreme significance which this splendid translation possesses for the scholarly lover of ancient Indian thought and history throughout the world. The book is printed on glazed paper and durably bound in board.

Speeches of Bhubhabhai Desai for Honour and Freedom 1938-39. G. A. Natesan and Co., Madras. Price Rs. 3-8 or 7 sh. 6d. (Foreign). Pp. 615.

Students of law and politics, and all those who are interested in Indian affairs in general, can hardly afford to neglect this volume, presenting the speeches of Sri B. J. Desai, the leader of the Congress Party in the Indian Legislative Assembly. His mature experience and thorough knowledge of law and administration of justice together with the qualities of leadership which he possesses to an eminent degree, has made these speeches worthy of being reproduced in book form so that it may be available for all permanently. The logic and language of these speeches are equally compelling. He voices the creed of the Congress in the best possible way. His robust faith in truth and non-violence, his heart's longing for Hindu-Muslim unity, which he believes should be based upon the recognition of the common source of their great cultural heritage, his vigorous plea for the freedom and honour of the motherland, his moving picture of the poverty of India and the imperious need of a dynamic programme, that must be worked with all the enthusiasm the Nation is capable of, to remove it, his abhorrence of the strength of the claws and the law of the jungle and his utter disgust with the oppressing bullies, find the warmest and most eloquent expression in these pages. The price fixed for the book is quite reasonable in view of its size and good get-up.

Hinduism in the Changing World: By K. M. Panikkar, Kitabstana, Allahabad. Price Re. 1.

The book under review is a critical account of Hinduism and its social institutions. Mr. Panikkar has ably put forward the case against caste system and has criticised the institution ruthlessly. He pleads for an entire abolition of the system. The principles underlying the scheme of the Varnas is to him Utopian. He does not believe that the ideal caste system ever translated itself into practical politics. He says that his study of Indian history has pointed out to him that there is no period in which the caste system worked ideally. It is the dead dream of a democratic poet and nothing more. Mr. Panikkar's argu-

ments have no doubt the merit of logical consistency. He is too much of a rationalist to see the bold imagination of the inaugurators of the caste system. To him uniformity means unity. The scheme of Varnasrama-dharmas is a grand and great idea. It is absurd to expect such a grand idea to institutionalise itself perfectly in the life habits of a nation. No institution can exhaust the potency of a great ideal. The moment a great ideal institutionalises itself it ceases to be an ideal. Practical efficiency and universal acceptance are not the tests for all the great principles of the world. One can very well appreciate Mr. Panikkar's enthusiasm to repudiate the extravagances of Hindu caste system. Abolition of caste system is no substitute for the establishment of Utopia on earth. Mr. Panikkar's polemical booklet is a challenge to modify and modernise the extravagances of the modern caste system.

P. NAGARAJA RAO, M.A.

The Gandhi Sutras: By D. S. Sarma, M.A., Principal, Pachaiyappa's College, Madras. Pp. 152. Price Rs. 1-8-0 wrap-per cover. (Profit will go to Harijan cause.)

Panini Sutras, *Jaimini Sutras* and the like were the works of Panini, Jaimini and others. But *Gandhi Sutras* is not the work of Gandhi on that analogy. Later on disciples or admirers wrote elaborate Bhashyas, which brought the ancient Sutras into full relief. Here, on the other hand, a contemporary admirer is the Sutrakara and the propounder of the Philosophy of Satyagraha himself, although unwittingly, is made to be the Bhashyakara. The sum total of Sutras here is the mystical number 108, and we have no hesitation to venture the *Phalasruti* (declaration of benefit): If anyone is serious enough to understand, assimilate and put into practice the salient precepts contained in these Sutras, that person is sure to become a worthy son of Mother India, a useful member of society and a humble contributor to the general progress of humanity. Persons desirous of getting a clear understanding of the Gandhian philosophy envisaged under the moral virtues like truthfulness, non-injury, devotion to God and courage, and under the social and political programme of Civil Disobedience, Charka and Satyagraha, have here a concise hand-book which saves them

the trouble of roving into the Akaragranthas or source-books, which in this case are the back volumes of *Young India*, *Harijan* and other papers which contain writings of Gandhiji. One ancient commentator used to pledge *na amulam likhyate Kinchit na anapeksitam uccyate*: (nothing unsupported by authority, nothing unwarranted by the text, shall I ever write). The present Sutrakara, true to this tradition, never makes a Sutra which is not supported or sanctioned by an array of extracts from his source-books which, of course, form the commentary also. Mr. Sarma, it is apparent, is not so jubilant in saving half a syllable as the author of the grammatical mnemonics to whom, on the principle of parsimony, such a gain was equivalent to Putrao'savam (jubilation at the birth of a child). For Mr. Sarma's Sutras are themselves clear short sentences quite understandable even without the lucid translation which he has added. They often call to mind a pale imitation or humorous parody of the ancient Sutras. Whether these Sutras will command the same authority and veneration after centuries as the *Vyakarana*, *Dharma* and *Vedanta Sutras* do at the present age, is an idle speculation for the time being. Whatever that be, the book is useful. It is a timely publication and deserves to be widely read both in the East and the West. It is an anthology of the spirited words of our greatest living apostle of national and international peace. Even apart from the Sutras the quotations themselves are organised into a fine book. The printing of the book is excellent.

Gandhi An Epic Fragment: By M. Sri Rama Murti, M.A. LL. B., M. R. College, Vizianagaram. Copies to be had of J. S. K. II. Grace and Co., Publishers, Vizianagaram. Price 8 annas. Pp. 21.

This is a metrical panegyric upon the Mahatma. Gandhiji is one of the greatest practical idealist of to-day, he values action more than words. His career is not one swept aloft on the wings of ambition, ever looking for praise; it is a reflective and critical pursuit of the ideal of truth that has made him more praiseworthy than almost all other contemporaries. We therefore believe that the best tribute to him would be to practice to one's best his noble ideals rather than to attempt

laboured melodies in an alien language, so rich in classical poetry that could easily put into shade even productions of high merit in the shortest time. However we commend the earnest spirit that is expressed in these lines embodying patriotic sentiments tinged with aesthetic emotion.

Mira Bai: *A true account of her life in the light of Modern Research, with a discourse on Her Bhajanas.* By Nalinimohan Sanyal, M.A., Bhashatattvaratna. Published by Ram Narain Lal, Publisher and Book sellers, Katra Rd., Allahabad. Pp 44. Price 6 annas.

This biographic monograph gleans together all authenticated historical facts about the illustrious saintly Mira Bai, whose mellifluous devotional strains are on the lips of the singers of Hindustan for over four centuries. Among the medieval Vaishnava Bhaktas Mira's name stands in the first rank as a splendid example of that form of Sadhana which she chose to follow, unmatched in purity, fervour and perfection, in later ages. An exquisite, though very short, account of the nature and direction of her divine love is given at the end by a few extracts from her soul stirring songs together with their English rendering. We heartily recommend this publication to all devoted to God.

Crumbs from His Table: By Ramana Swarnagiri. Published by Sri K. S. Narayanaswami Iyer, Office Superintendent, C. T. S.'s Office, S. I. Ry. Trichinopoly. Free.

The author's contact with Sri Ramana Maharshi and the light and guidance received from him on the path of Self-Knowledge are clearly explained in this book under different headings such as *Sraddha*, *Control of Mind*, *Resignation*, *Renunciation*, etc. It is an interesting volume that may be read with profit by lovers of Vedanta.

Prem Yoga (Hindi) Copies can be had of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Dhantoli, Nagpore, C. P. Price 8 annas.

Pandit Dwarakanath Tivari, B.A., L.L.B., has done a service to the Hindi-speaking public by producing a faithful and lucid translation of the six lectures

entitled "Addresses on Bhakti" published in the Third Volume, and the one entitled "Bhakti or Devotion" published in the Second Volume of the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda. It is a highly valuable addition to the expanding Hindi literature.

Sri Ramanascharitamritam : (Hindi) Translated by Pandit Venkatesa Sarma Sastri (Sri Kasi Vidyapith). Published by Sri Swami Niranjananandaji, Sri Ramasram, Tiruvannamalai. Price Rs. 1-12-0.

The long-felt need of a Hindi version of the Maharshi's great Life is effectively removed by this exhaustive and illustrated work.

Gita-Sandesh (Hindi) Translated by Gulab Rai, M.A. Published by Ananda Asram, Ramnagar, P.O. Kanhangad, S.I.R. Price: Popular Edition 8 annas; Superior Edition 12 annas.

This is a very readable rendering of the practical and suggestive English book called the "Message of Gita" by Swami Ramadas. The book is very helpful in cultivating devotion towards God.

1. Mata 2. Is Jagat Ki Paheli 3. Yoga Pradip (Hindi) Published by Aravinda Granth Mala, 4, Hare Street, Calcutta. Price 1 & 3, annas 8 each, and 2, annas 10.

The above books are the Hindi renderings of Sri Aurobindo's well-known books "Mother", "The Riddle of the World" and "Lights on Yoga". These translations are easy and natural, and they convey the ideas of the original without distorting them.

Kalyan Manasanka : Gita Press, Gorakhpur.

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THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XXV]

APRIL, 1939

[No. 12

HINDU ETHICS

विरुधो वीर्यहीनो यः स दैवमनुवर्तते । वीरः सम्भावितात्मानो न दैवं पर्युपासते ॥
दैवं पुरुषकारेण यः समर्थः प्रबाधितुं । न दैवेन विपन्नार्थः पुरुषः सोऽवसीदति ॥
विहाय तन्त्रीं शोकं च निद्रां चैव समुत्थिताम् । विचिनुष्वं यथा सीतां पश्यामो जनकात्मजाम् ॥
अनिर्वेदं च दाक्ष्यं च मनसश्चापराजयम् । कार्यसिद्धिकराण्याहुः तस्मादेतद् ब्रवीम्यहम् ॥
अवश्यं क्रियमाणस्य दृश्यते कर्मणः फलम् । अलं निर्वेदमागम्य नहि नो मीलनं क्षमम् ॥
न विषादे मनः कार्ये विषादो दोषवत्तमः । विषादो हन्ति पुरुषं बालं क्रुद्धं इवोरगः ॥
विषादोऽयं प्रसहते विक्रमे पर्युपस्थिते । तेजसा तस्य हीनस्य पुरुषार्थो न सिध्यति ॥

He who is confused and has no vigour in him, alone will be depending upon Fate or good luck. Heroic, self-reliant men would not worship at the altar of Fate. He who has the capacity to overcome the freaks of Fate by personal endeavour can never be cowed down by a Fate that frustrates the hopes of men. Flinging aside laziness, fear and somnolence, push your quest onward, so that we find out Sita. An unvanquishable mind that knows no dejection, and great dexterity are the factors that ensure success in any endeavour. That is why I advise you thus. A deed, when it is done, must necessarily bear its fruit. Away with pessimism; it is improper to remain with our eyes closed to our duty. Let not the mind slip into grief; to be pining (over an event) is the worst evil. One is undone thereby, just as a child is undone by a snake. But where valour is present, sorrow can be checked effectively. None of the ends of human life can be achieved by a man who has no stamina in him.

Valmiki Ramayana, II: 30.17, 18; IV: 49.5, 6, 8; 64.11, 12.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

[This is the twelfth and the last of the series of articles on Sri Ramakrishna, that have been appearing in the course of this year.]

I

THE survey we have made of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings in this series of articles would have impressed the minds of our readers with one fundamental idea. It is this: Whatever the Master spoke on God and spiritual life, he spoke from experience, and not from mere book-knowledge. In fact, it was the test of experience that he always offered as the proof of his teachings. "I do see the Being as the veritable reality with my very eyes!" he says. "Why then should I reason? I do actually see that it is the Absolute who has become all things around us. It is He who appears as the finite soul and the phenomenal world!" And once when Swami Vivekananda asked him the pointed question, 'Sir, have you seen God?'—he replied unhesitatingly, "I have seen Him. Not only that, I see Him more intensely than I see you, and I can also show Him to you if you want." These are, no doubt, tremendous claims, and one may feel great difficulty in understanding their true significance, not to speak of accepting all their metaphysical and psychological implications. And yet, since the whole edifice of the Master's teachings rests on his claim to have seen the Divine face to face, it is very important to have a due appreciation of this supreme fact, if one is to enter into the true spirit of the teachings that have been set forth in this series of

articles. Therefore, in closing this series, we shall make a general review of the Master's spiritual experiences, and draw some general conclusions from the same.

From his very childhood, Sri Ramakrishna was inclined towards the life of the Spirit, and showed signs of a mystical temperament and great receptivity to higher experiences. As a boy, on seeing a number of snow-white cranes flying against a background of sombre rain clouds, he fell into an ecstasy, passing from the contemplation of Nature's beauty to absorption in Nature's Lord. Devotional music, recital of the lives of holy personages, worship, pilgrimages to shrines—these were the things that stirred his being to the deepest core from early days. This dominant trait of his character did not, however, find its fullest expression until he took up the work of a priest in the Kali temple of Dakshineswar, in the year 1855. The Master himself told his disciples that till then he had never thought of taking to an exclusively ascetic life, and that the ideal he cherished was of the pious householder that he had witnessed in his own father. But since that time the Divine Mother entered into his being, as it were, and caused such a revolution in his thought and outlook on life that a new spiritualised type of humanity has come to be revealed to us through his body and mind.

The beginnings of this transformation were characterised by deep absorption in meditation and devotional music, and the substitution of the rigid observance of rituals in worship by an informality of procedure that was born of a sense of intimacy with the object of worship. Soon after, there grew in his mind a passionate longing to know whether the Mother he worshipped was real or not, and in course of time this longing became so great that one day, despairing of all chances of its fulfilment, he was about to commit suicide. At that psychological moment he had a revelation of the Deity as 'a boundless, effulgent Ocean of Intelligence'. This first flight of the soul only went to whet his appetite for the Divine; for it brought on his mind only a feeling of temporary solace and not a permanent enrichment of consciousness. Hence in the period of dryness that soon followed, he was filled with a longing, even more powerful than the previous, to feel the presence of God everywhere and at all times. The intensity of it was so great that he practically lost all sense of reality for the external world. Without any thought of even food or sleep, he spent days and nights in prayer to the Divine Mother with an agonised heart. Often, in fits of desperate longing, he was seen to rub his face on the ground until it bled.

In later days, describing this insatiable craving of his soul for God, he said to his disciples that it was like the organic craving that a man kept under water felt for a breath of air. Or again one could have a hazy idea of its intensity if one could imagine a concentration of these three types of attachments—the miser's

fondness for his hoarded wealth, a noble lady's love for her husband, and a parent's affection for an only child. And it is said that whenever this longing was at its highest, revelations came to him, soothing the anguish of the soul and bestowing the indubitable conviction of the Divine presence.

Till 1861 his spiritual striving was more or less a solitary and unaided quest, but since then great teachers went to him, as if sent by Divine Providence, to help him in his search after God and guide him in the practice of spiritual disciplines enjoined by the scriptures. The first of these teachers to arrive was a middle-aged Brahmin woman of great learning and high spiritual attainments. Under her guidance he successfully underwent all the principal spiritual practices mentioned in the sixty-four Shakta Tantras dealing with the worship of God as the Divine Mother. Besides bestowing on him the realisation of the Divine Mother in diverse aspects, these disciplines of the Mother cult established him in the conviction that every woman is a manifestation and a symbol of the Divine Mother in a special sense.

Another form of spiritual discipline he practised was what are inculcated by the scriptures of the Vaishnava cult. The essential principle of these disciplines consists in cultivating various forms of personal relationship with the Deity, as those of a servant, a parent, a friend, and a sweet-heart. Sri Ramakrishna practised all of them, and had the realisation of the Deity in aspects that are special to these different relationships.

The spiritual disciplines he had undergone till now had the realisation

of the Deity in His personal aspect as their object. In 1864, Sri Ramakrishna took to the contemplation of the Impersonal Brahman of the Vedānta under the guidance of a great wandering Sannyasin named Tota Puri. This is the most difficult of all spiritual disciplines, as it requires the aspirant to liberate his mind from the mould of name, form and relativity—its natural environment for untold ages of evolution. Sri Ramakrishna attained perfection in this path, too, with astonishing rapidity, three days of practice being enough for him to attain Nirvikalpa Samādhi, the goal of Vedāntic disciplines. Free as his mind was from all worldly taint, the only obstacle that stood in his way was the form of the Divine Mother, on which he had been contemplating devotedly all his life. To use his own words, he cut that form in two with the sword of discrimination, and his mind rose above the relative plane and was absorbed in unconditioned Samādhi. Sometime after that, he remained absorbed in the Nirvikalpa state for a continuous period of six months. During this time he had no physical consciousness, and except at brief intervals one could notice in him no sign of physical life even. The body was saved from death only due to artificial feeding of it by a Sadhu who was present at Dakshineswar at the time.

Within a few years after this, he had also occasion to practise spiritual disciplines according to Islam and Christianity. We have it from him that these paths also took him to the same goal as the various forms of spiritual practices inculcated by Hindu cults.

The long period of his spiritual practices came to a close in 1872 with the inspiring rite known as the Shodashi Pooja, when he worshipped his own wedded wife as the Deity. This symbolised his attainment of that state of spiritual consciousness in which the Divinity is recognised in every being. From this time onward the insatiable hankering he used to have for spiritual practices of diverse kinds subsided, and an intense spirit of redeeming love characteristic of world-teachers took possession of his soul.

II

This brief review of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual practices naturally raises the question as to what he actually gained by them, and how we are to arrive at a proper estimate of their value. To consider the former point first, we have it from Sri Ramakrishna that his spiritual strivings resulted in a permanent enrichment of consciousness—a state of mind which he described by the significant expression, *Bhava-mukha*. A study of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual experiences cannot be complete without taking into account the deep metaphysical and psychological implications of this concept. The following is a brief consideration of this subject.

Our mind ordinarily dwells in the relative plane, and even of that, at the grossest levels. Indian psychologists have discovered seven centres at different levels of the spinal column as the loci of the mind at different stages of spiritual evolution. To enumerate these centres, they are the base of the spinal column, and the levels of the genitals,

of the navel, of the heart, of the throat, and of the eyebrows, and finally the crown of the head. The spiritual evolution of man consists in the shifting of the mind's centre of activity from the lower to the higher of these centres. For along with the rise of the mind, there takes place the awakening of the latent spiritual potentiality of man, known in mystic language as the Kundalini or the coiled-up energy. It is called coiled-up, because in the natural man Kundalini is 'asleep', i.e., dwells at the lowermost centre of the spinal column and hides from the vision of man the higher nature of himself as well as of the Reality of which he is a part. When the Kundalini is asleep, the mind of man is confined to the three lowermost centres of the spinal column, and the focus of its attention is limited to the gross objects of the physical plane that impinge on the five senses, and to the intellectual and aesthetic apprehensions that have their basis in physical life. At that stage, therefore, man feels a sense of reality only with regard to the gross world he sees around him, and the pursuit of selfish interests and the gratification of sensuous appetites form the only aim of his life. All his energies are wasted by vain struggles outside. Spiritual life begins when man feels sincerely dissatisfied with this type of life and in place of dissipating his energies, begins to conserve them.

As these energies gather themselves up at the third centre, the sleeping Kundalini in him wakes up and begins its upward march towards the centre in the crown of the head. When the energy rises to the fourth

centre at the heart, and the mind begins to dwell there, the aspirant becomes an ethical man. He develops an intense spirit of fellow-feeling and begins to feel genuine delight in relieving the sufferings of others without any consideration of selfish gain. He may also get the vision of a Divine effulgence. At this stage, the mind is always in danger of sliding down to the lower centres if the aspirant is not very alert. But in the case of a very sincere person, success is certain. He gradually begins to perceive that God is even higher than good works, that even the idea of doing good to others is a product of egotism, that God is in Himself competent to look after His creatures even without His aid, and that His supreme duty as man consists in seeking Him with a longing heart. When this longing for God becomes intense, the Kundalini, and along with it the mind, rise to the fifth centre at the level of the throat. Higher levels of Reality are now laid bare to man's vision, and it becomes possible for him to see the Deity in His various formful aspects. The state of his mind becomes such that he can neither talk nor hear about anything except God. Even from this condition a man may slip down to the three lower centres. But he is above all fear when the Kundalini rises to the sixth centre opposite the junction of the eyebrows. As the mind begins to dwell there, he gets the vision of the Paramatman, and he remains always absorbed in Samadhi. There is only a thin transparent veil between this centre and the seventh one in the head where the Divine manifests Himself in His fulness. Owing to this, the

aspirant feels that he has merged himself in the Deity, but really he has not. From this state too the mind can come down to the fifth or at the most to the fourth centre, but not below that. The ordinary aspirants, classed as Jivas, cannot however come down from that state. After remaining constantly in Samadhi for twenty-one days, they break that veil and become one with the Lord for ever.

Thus the spheres of Reality that an aspirant realises up to the fifth plane are within the realms of relativity, of which our present consciousness is the grossest. At the sixth centre alone the mind catches glimpses of the Absolute, and it is only in the seventh that the mind becomes one with the Absolute. As we have seen, in the case of ordinary aspirants the mind does not come to the relative plane after that, and the body therefore perishes before long. But there are some rare exceptions to this. These are the Divine Incarnations. In the case of such a one, the ego merges in the Absolute, but by the inscrutable Divine Will, which the Master terms the Mother, he regains the relative consciousness. Having experienced the Absolute, the state of his mind is in every way peculiar. He is like one sitting on the threshold of a room—he sees everything within the room as well as what is outside it. He has the experiences of the relative world, but at the same time he is in tune with the Absolute. It is therefore possible for him to engage himself in works of the relative world like any ordinary man, but the whole meaning and impulsion behind his activities is different. For the ordinary man, being without the knowledge of the Absolute, sees the world

only under the limitations of name and form, and is aware only of the promptings of the limited ego in his works. But to the incarnation, the Universe, including his own ego, is the expression of a Will that is identical with the Absolute itself. Thus, his little ego is completely identified with the Cosmic Ego, and in every action of his, he is conscious of the Divine Will working. As a consequence, his thoughts and works are charged with a power that makes them felt by large communities of men and by generations that are far removed from him in time. Being at one with the Universal Ego, he is able to attune his thoughts automatically to the needs and aspirations of men at every stage of spiritual development, however high or low they may be. Though it may appear contradictory, he can traverse all the gamuts of spiritual life from the crudest to the most sublime, and thus present in himself ideals and phases of character that appeal to men of divergent natures and levels of growth. Bhakti and Jnana, devotion to Personal Deity and absorption in the Absolute, dynamism of action and the calm of passivity—all harmoniously mingle in him without any trace of contradiction.

We referred to *Bhava-mukha* as the state of permanent enrichment of consciousness that Sri Ramakrishna attained by his spiritual practices. All that we have described above are the implication of that state. To put them briefly, *Bhava-mukha* is not the type of spiritual perfection attainable by the master of either the relative or the Absolute levels of reality, but that broadening and intensification of consciousness resulting

from the direct grasp of them both, and the consequent elimination of the limited individual ego and establishment in the Cosmic Ego—the one Will that is at the back of the whole Universe. Sri Ramakrishna was different from the ordinary run of men because of this attainment.

III

In conclusion, there are two aspects of Sri Ramakrishna's life that bear witness to the truth of his experiences. The first relates to the nature of his quest itself. In the earlier part of this essay, we have described its nature and shown how it was a passion in which his whole body, mind and soul united, as in the panting of a drowning man for a breath of air. Now in Nature we find that wherever there is a craving of this kind affecting the whole man, there is also a close correspondence between it and his environment—in other words, there is something in his environment for satisfying a craving of this type. Thus hunger, thirst and other basic demands of man find their appropriate objects in his environment. If, then, the craving for God is also of this nature, only in a much more intense sense, as it undoubtedly was in the Master's case, we must naturally infer that it can find satisfaction only in a *real* object that corresponds to it, even as thirst and hunger can be satisfied only by water and food. And what has been revealed to humanity in Sri Ramakrishna's life is that man has the capacity to feel such a hankering for God, and that his environment is fully responsive to that craving. In other words, his life and experiences show us that God is an indubitable reality and

that man can realise Him in this very life.

The account we have already given of *Bhava-mukha* also testifies to the genuineness and worth-while-ness of this experience. For we have seen that it is a state of peace, bliss and power, and that it is not a passing mood but a permanent enrichment of personality. But the greatest assurance we have of its reality is the way in which God-consciousness remained an integral part of the Master's nature even at the times of the worst trials that life could offer. For example, the Master passed away of cancer in the throat—one of the most excruciating diseases known to medical science. The last strait to which a human being can be brought by a disease of this kind, is a condition that would wear out the faith and courage built on any illusory foundation. In Sri Ramakrishna we notice that even the worst sufferings could not in the least touch his basic convictions and the experience of peace and bliss that reigned in the mind. The body, no doubt, suffered terribly, but the mind floated above physical sufferings with its anchor secure in the Lord. And as soon as any Divine thought arose in his mind with vividness, he used to forget the body and get absorbed in Samadhi as in his healthy days. So vivid was his awareness of the Divine that when several of his followers used to request him to pray for his own recovery, he would say in reply, "How can I fix my mind, which I have dedicated to the Lord, upon this wretched cage of flesh and blood. When I think of my Mother, the physical body vanishes, and I am entirely out of it. So it is impossible

for me to pray for anything concerning the body....I am now speaking and eating through so many mouths. I am the Soul of all the souls. I have infinite mouths. I am the Infinite Spirit covered with a human skin which is wounded somewhere in the throat.....When the body is suffering from excruciating pain and starvation, and when it is beyond all human power to give any relief, even then the Mother shows me that spirit is master of the body. My Divine Mother has brought this illness upon this body to convince the sceptics

that the Atman is Divine, that God-consciousness is true, that when one reaches perfection, freedom from all bondage is attained."

The supreme message of Sri Ramakrishna to mankind, therefore, consists in the strength of his yearning for the Divine, in the example of the fulfilment of that yearning his life offers, and in the persistence with which this God-consciousness abides with him in all conditions of life. His life is a challenge to the scepticism and Godlessness of the modern age.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

By A Disciple

[Sri Saradamani Devi, known also as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the Bengali original.]

THE Holy Mother was seated on a blanket in the room adjoining the Shrine in the Udbodhan Office. I was engaged in conversation with her.

Disciple: How long did you live at Dakshineswar?

Mother: Oh, for many years. I first went there at the age of sixteen. From then on I lived there as long as the Master lived at Dakshineswar. I used to go to our native village once every two or three years. I went to Kamarpukur at the time of Ramlal's marriage.

Disciple: Did you live all alone?

Mother: Now and then I would be alone; otherwise my mother-in-law was with me. Sometimes Golapma, Gauri Dasi and other devotees used to stay with me. I lived in a very small room which was kitchen, living room and bed room, all in that tiny space. I used to cook for the Master. He had poor digestion; so he could not eat the food-offerings from the Kali Temple. I also had to cook for other devotees of the Master. Latu lived with him. After he quarrelled with Rama Dutta, he came away. The Master said to me, "He is a nice boy; he will knead your

flour." I had to cook day and night. When Rama Dutta¹ used to come, he would shout after getting out of the carriage, "Today I shall eat *Ruti*¹ and Dal of gram." Then I would at once start cooking. I used to make bread out of three or four seers of flour. When Rakhal lived there, I often made *Khichuri* for him. Suren Mitra gave ten rupees a month for the expenses of the devotees. Gopal Senior did the marketting. Dancing, music, Kirtana, ecstacy and Samadhi went on day and night. I made apertures on a bamboo-mat screen, so that I could watch through it. My standing there continuously finally gave me this rheumatism.

For sometime I had a maid-servant, Jadu's mother. An old woman, too, used to visit me. She had led an immoral life during her younger days but during her old age she chanted the name of God. I lived all alone; so I used to pass some time in her company. One day the Master noticed her and said, "Why do you allow her to come here?" "She is now leading a good life," I said; "She talks about God. What's the harm in allowing her to come? A person does not always cherish in his mind the feelings of his earlier years." "What a shame!" exclaimed the Master, "she has been a prostitute, and you talk to her! Suppose she is pious now! Rama! Rama!" He forbade me even to speak to people of that ilk lest they should poison my mind. He protected me in this way.

Once Ramji Rai of Kamarpukur visited him. He was not a good man.

¹ Ruti — Thin, unleavened bread baked over charcoal.

After he had left, the Master called, "Hello! Who is there? Dig out a basketful of earth here!" As no one came, he himself took the spade and scraped up some earth. He remarked, "The place where a man like him sits, becomes impure."

Durgacharan of East Bengal used to visit the Master. What devotion he had for him! At the time of his illness, Durgacharan searched for Amalaki fruits for three days and at last procured them. The Master had expressed his desire for that fruit. For three days and nights, Durgacharan neither ate nor slept. Once I gave him Prasadam on a plate of Sal leaves. He ate even the plate. He had a black complexion and rather dry appearance. His eyes were big and bright and always moist with tears of divine love.

"How many people used to come then with such intense devotion! And those who come now constantly say, 'Please show us the Master!' They practise neither spiritual disciplines nor worship, neither Japam nor austerities! In previous births they committed many heinous crimes—murder of cows, Brahmins and children in the mothers' wombs. They must first reap the results of their wicked actions; then only they may get the vision of God. The moon in the sky is hidden under a cloud. The wind must first of all blow away the cloud and then alone the moon will appear. Can that happen so quickly? This is also true of the vision of God.

The effect of past actions comes to an end only slowly. When God reveals Himself to an aspirant, He also gives him inner knowledge and intuition through the help of which the

devotee becomes aware of his realization."

* * *

Girish Chandra Ghosh had given up his body on the previous night. Referring to him, I asked the Holy Mother, "Well, Mother, how do those who give up their bodies in a state of unconsciousness attain to a spiritual state afterwards?"

Mother: The thought that is uppermost in mind before one loses consciousness determines the course of his soul after death.

Disciple: Yes, that is true. A little after six o'clock in the evening Girish Babu exclaimed, "Jai Ramakrishna" and then fell unconscious. Afterwards he never regained his consciousness. A few minutes before that he had been constantly saying, "Let us go¹! Let us go" "Hold me a little, my son!" and so forth. I said to him, "Why do you only say 'Let us go! Let us go!' You had better repeat the name of Sri Ramakrishna which will do you real good." I said that a couple of times when Girish Babu replied, "Do I not know that?" I said to myself, "Now see, he is fully conscious within."

Mother: He remained immersed in the thought which was in his mind when he became unconscious. They all have come from him (referring to Sri Ramakrishna) and will go back to him. They all have come from him—from his arms, feet, hair, and

so forth. They are his limbs, parts.

Gauri-Ma was present. She remarked in the course of the talk, "The Master said he would be born twice more—once as a Baul.²"

Mother: Yes, he said to me that when he would be born as a Baul, I would carry his smoking-pipe and the tobacco-pot (Kalki) for him, and he would carry a broken tray of stone. His meals would be cooked in a broken pot. He would walk indifferently, without looking at anything in particular. Lakshmi³ heard it and said, "I am not coming back even if I am chopped to shreds like smoking tobacco." He replied with a smile, "Where will you stay if I come back to this earth? Your soul will pant for me. You all are like the Kalmi⁴ creeper. If one end is pulled the whole thing moves." One day, I was getting down from the railway train at Brindavan. The boys⁵ had already alighted. Golap was helping them take down our bags and baggage. The smoking-pipe and tobacco-pot belonging to Latu were handed to me. Lakshmi said, "Now, you have in your hands the smoking-pipe and the tobacco-pot!" I also exclaimed, "O Master! O Master! Here I have fulfilled your words. I have the smoking-pipe and the tobacco-pot in my hands," and dropped them on the ground.

2. Baul—A minstrel; a religious mendicant.

3. Lakshmi—A niece of the Master.

4. Kalmi—An aquatic plant which spreads far with numerous ramifications.

5. Boys—Swami Yogananda and other young disciples of the Master.

1. Let us go—Girish Babu had the intense desire to be taken to the Ganges at the time of death. Therefore he made those remarks. His brother said, "Does my brother need the Ganges for the welfare of his soul?"

SANGUINARY COMMUNIONS

By Dr. Charles Baudouin

[Dr. Charles Baudouin, is a well-known French author, scholar and philosopher. His works include studies on the lives and writings of Victor Hugo and Count Tolstoi, translations of important books from the Greek, German, Russian and other European languages and above all poems of rare beauty and charm. He is a recognised authority on modern psychology and his numerous works on that subject, especially his 'Suggestion and Auto-suggestion', have been translated into many languages.]

I

IT is not the instincts alone that are repressed; the mind also can be repressed. The repressed instinct does not disappear; it continues to have a subterranean existence; it brings about a regression to a primitive stage of religious life, wherefrom it calls forth unforeseen and barbarous explosions. It is this we desire to bring into prominence here by referring to the concrete examples of certain excitements and certain mystic systems of today.

The great collective excitements are always a shock for those who witness them dispassionately. Like passion, they are irrational and violent, and disconcert the spectator. We do not know whether we ought to admire, censure or pity them.

If possible, we shall neither praise nor blame. Let us seek to understand. For that, we should think for a moment with the historic sense. We shall then recognise in these modern excitements, survivals as old as human society. Here is the Dionysiac orgy the Bacchanal; there the totemic sacrifice. We have to go back to them for understanding the passion which animates the crowds.

The totemic sacrifice, especially must always be present before us. It

will give us the clue to a good many of the regressions of the crowd incomprehensible without it. We are familiar with the scenario; the primitive social group is gathered round the place of sacrifice, the place where the totem, the sacred animal, is killed; the totem is eaten and every one partakes of its flesh, blood and energy. Every one who is present there incorporates it and seals anew by it his organic union with the other members of the group, 'each to its part there and all to the whole.'

Let us go back to the scenario. The investigation of the unconscious shows that it lives profoundly inscribed in the substructure of the spirit of civilisation. It reawakens at the first call. Let us recognise this. Let us know that it is present more or less in the background of all the collective excitements where one sees a crowd which makes a circle, actually or figuratively, round a point where some sanguinary drama of mysterious fascination is played. It is but the accident of the street: the circle is immediately formed; the soul of the tribe is evoked; a little after, the architecture of the amphitheatre emerges anew from the ground. Let us compare these spectacles with the primitive sacrifice; then we understand something of the psychology of

the crowds, which is a scandal to reason.

It is then that we begin to understand profoundly the type of cruelty which lurks in every excited crowd and which according to the object of excitement bursts forth in a greater or lesser degree. Cruelty mixed with admiration; the ambivalence of the tribe which kills the sacred animal! Among the civilised, the sacred animal is perhaps figured by many emblems. It is quite recognisable in the bull-race; but its role is perhaps also taken by the gladiator in the arena and the motor-cyclist who, in his swift vehicle, crackles, spelling death. What does the blow matter when one is intoxicated: visible or latent, the presence of death alone brings about frenzy. It leaps up in military excitements; but there is no necessity to cite that extreme example. I was present at the spectacle of the people of Paris paying homage to the assassinated president Doumer; it was clear that day that the Parisians were performing an age-old rite and that they were eating the totem.

It is thus that we can understand something about the psychology of sport. I do not speak of sport so far as it is nothing but an exercise, enthusiasm, a physical pleasure. But it becomes very soon something else even when the sportsman is unconscious of it. It is collective excitement and in that we see another reproduction of the ancient scenario.

The spectator, through all his muscles, attempts to follow the movements of the boxer: this fact has been cited in support of psychology of imitation. But one does not imitate with such force in other cases. Imitation

is not a sufficient explanation. There is something else, the latent spirit of the scenario. We may speak of it as participation in the mystic sense of the word. The modern sport fever cannot be grasped unless we take it as a substitute for cult. But it is regressive cult and very close to the primitive scenario, for it smacks of blood.

"Can we not at least," so ask some good souls "diminish the risks of accidents from swift vehicles and soften the manners of boxers?" Who will not subscribe to this sentiment. But such an attempt will perhaps only augment the excitement of the crowds. "Are not bull-fights gratuitous cruelty?" asks another. Assuredly. But take care that the people, to whom this advice is offered, do not replace it by man-fight and human sacrifice. This is already an accomplished fact. Detestable though a thing may be, it is not enough merely to suppress it. We must always see what we have substituted for it, or what spontaneously rises to take its place.

We are blinded indeed by prejudice if we do not see that religious communions are the purest. The cautious eye of the historian will certainly detect here also traces of primitive mentality, for the simple reason that they are here as everywhere else, and the orthodox historian himself recognises them unmoved. The Christian eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the lamb killed in the sacrifice. But the primitive aspiration appears here in a highly sublimated form which commands respect at least. The whole question is truly one of the degree of sublimation. All human facts, no matter what they are, are

based upon some simple and primitive schemes which one can rediscover if one digs deep enough. Let us just note to what degree the fact in question has developed from that inevitable basis.

Certainly they are also to be respected, the scruples of honest souls—rationalists, calvisists, Jansenites—who do not see anything but idolatry and bad taste in certain more authentic collective manifestations of religion in the creeds which form themselves side by side with religion and which the Church tolerates or encourages, such as those of Lourdes, Joan of Arc, Saint Theresa of Lisieux. Certainly these waves are not the expressions of the purest spirituality. But let the critics be prudent. There is a necessity for these so far as the crowds are concerned. They have to consider conscientiously how they would satisfy those human needs.

It should not be thought from this that we are here taking into account the hypocritical and detestable formula—'some sort of religion for the crowd.' In place of congregational communion, suggest anything better that you have. But if you are content with merely rooting out that which they have because it does not satisfy your taste, see that they do not take up something much worse. It is like the question of dry regulation. Mere prohibition is not enough. The question is to know whether people will not demand more dangerous stuff. To our present question which concerns the frenzy of communions, the answer is clear. People who do not attend vespers go to the matches.

We can follow the history of the substitutes offered in place of religious

communion in the age of religious decline. First of all there is nationalism; then comes the sport. We have seen the bloody bacchanal to which the latter has led us. We begin to see to what foolish brutality the former can descend. I do not say that both are necessarily bad in themselves: but what a fall! And the mystic 'totalitarian' systems of recent times seem to contain the danger in a very great degree. A society cannot give up the cult of the idols with impunity.

II

Let us take the example of a collective passion which seems to belong to remote history and on which the present regression confers an unexpected aftermath of tragic actuality. I speak of anti-semitism. It deserves to be closely analysed.

The essential elements of anti-semitism certainly proceed from the most obscure sentiments. That is why we do not gain much by carrying on the discussion on a rational basis. On the contrary the psychology of the unconscious will perhaps help us here. The psycho-analysis of Freud has, in good time, presented us with curious accounts of the relations of anti-semitism with the complex of mutilation and pointed out unforeseen associations which exist in the unconscious among circumcision, castration and inferiority. This is the first group of facts we should take into account.

Later, Jung has drawn our attention to more complex elements (in his book *Psychological Types*). In the Christian society of the Middle Ages, strongly consolidated by severe orthodoxy, the Jew appears as the

rebel, one who has not become a member of the society. Since then a projection has intervened (projection is the mechanism by which we attribute to others the sentiments which we ourselves possess in an unconscious and suppressed state). Each man carries in himself, unconscious and suppressed, a rebel, a barbarian, who does not conform to the consciously adopted standards of the morale and the society surrounding him. The Jew (as also at certain epochs the heretic) furnishes for the conformist Christians, a type singularly favourable to the projection of the internal infidel. The Christian projects on the Jew a scape-goat, all that he feels confusedly in himself of the un-Christian in him. He commences to detest in the Jew somewhat as the American in the Negro—the living image of his own reprobate instincts. In this respect, the origin of anti-semitism is not unrelated to the genesis of the madness of persecution, which also is based on a projection. On that basis, we can understand that a particularly violent anti-semitism can exist among subjects who have or are believed to have a Jewish origin more or less distant.

But we cannot go to the root of the question without taking into consideration the region of the collective inconscient, wherefrom the ritualist theme of sacrifice quickens into life. Now in sacrifice, besides the victim and the circle of the faithful who participate in it, there is also a person who plays the very important role of the sacrificer. He plays the part of the murderer forbidden to all others and becomes at the same time 'sacred' though in the negative sense of sacred horror (taboo). Now the Jew in so

far as he represents the murderer of Jesus exactly takes this role of the ritual sacrificer in Christian thought. For example what is the foundation for the delirious, though magnificent, invectives of Leon Bloy, in his curious pamphlet, *Le Salut par Les Juifs* (Salvation through the Jews)? We find there visible traces of the Freudian elements we have noticed before. Thus, we see him writing: "Just as the Christians bear the miniature cross in their bosom and erect the cross in front of their churches, the Jews carry their symbol in the hollows in their devastated souls or the perilous caverns of their synagogues. That gaping imprint extends as the precipice of chaos. They have sought to collect money and they have not succeeded except in giving to this terrible cancer the appearance of a lurid star . . ." (XXVI). But that which is predominantly perceptible throughout these absurd and eloquent pages is the current of thought we seek to define and which however irrational it may be, is charged with a strong affective power. It is clear that the Jew is for Bloy a combination of the execrable murderer and the venerable instrument of sacrifice—"they are forced by God, invincibly and supernaturally forced to accomplish the abominable beastliness necessary for establishing their dishonour of being the instruments of the redemption" . . . (X). Such is the impossible dilemma in which the Middle Age writhed itself as in the clutches of vice. Also it uninterruptedly curses or massacres the abominable antagonists except when they crawl at its feet soliciting the mercy of the suffering God.

The Jew plays this role of the sacrificer. We shall not be surprised if his image—a strange phenomenon—presents in the unconscious of the Christian people certain points of contact with the priest, the clergyman, who also plays an official part in the cult of sacrifices—the role of the sacrificer. This serves to explain why the clergyman is, in Christian folklore, often like the Jew, a negative force and a mysteriously redoubtable personage. We can conclude from this that anti-clericalism and anti-semitism are more than what they seem to be. They are allied sentiments. They shoot forth from the same ground. It is abundantly clear that anti-clericalism has no significance other than an intimate adhesion to the ritual of sacrifice and that, however atheistical they may be in their own conscience, the critics of the clergy as also of the Jews are dominated in their unconscious by the scenario of Christian sacrifice; their hunger for communion, if it refuses to touch the divine body, indemnifies itself with "eating" the sacrificer. It is a substitute for communion.

Such sentiments are distinguished broadly from other collective excitements by the fact that in the primitive scenario of ritual sacrifice, they stress another point. The sacred victim is no more the centre of attraction; he gives way to the sacrificer (as, in the lists, when the people work themselves up to such a condition that they no more see the bleeding bull, but the bull-fighter). The excitement recoils on the sacrificer and he is treated as the victim.

A curious fact; but we may explain it thus: the sentiment which addresses

itself to the totemic victim, to every divine victim, is ambivalent and contradictory: it is composed of two elements—adoration and the spirit of murder. It is an unstable equilibrium; it is not rarely that one sees the ambivalence and dissociates the positive and the negative elements of which it is constituted in their relation to two different objects. We have seen an example of this in our analysis of Victor Hugo. His ambivalence in regard to Napoleon breaks itself when Napoleon III, appearing now and again, furnishes him a means of catalysis—an object to suit the negative element—the execration; then he can be unreservedly idealistic as regards Napoleon I and the antithesis between "Napoleon the great" and "Napoleon the petty" and give to the sentiment a position of equilibrium. The logical thought thus throws in an internal "pre-logical" contribution which is an integral part of the primitive mystic scenario, a certain order which allows it to be more accommodating. It is small comfort for the civilised man to adore and to execrate the same being at one and the same time; that is doubtless why the "totalitarian" excitements imperiously need a scapegoat. Another solution is to arrange in time the two contradictory positions and to adore first all his ancestors so that he may afterwards burn the one whom he wishes to adore. One solution does not exclude the others and the deified chief who has been preserved at one time at the expense of a particular scapegoat runs the risk of being victimised in his turn. It is then said that the favour of the crowd is capricious; but "caprice" is a superficial expla-

nation as the example of the foolery cited before bears out. It is much more profound and serious.

Whatever that may be, these sentiments astonishingly disconcerting to reason—these caricatures, sometimes sinister, of the passion—are the survivals of primitive structures which have at their origin an undeniable function suited to the exigencies of the gregarious instinct for the purpose of assuring at all costs the strong cohesion of the clan. These attitudes revive in those moments and at those places where that cohesion is particularly compromised and the disorder threatens to install itself permanently. This is their biological excuse, their *raison d'etre*. The infidel becomes the scapegoat and pays with his blood for the unity of the tribe. Each fagot thrown at the pyre of the heretic raises higher the flame of the fanatic communion. But it is quite clear that the society of to-day should assure their cohesion by less primitive methods.

III

Of course it is not enough to "analyse" and "reduce" (restrain) the forms of sacrilegious communion. The need of communion persists and should persist; the need for it is lodged in us; it is at the base of the humanity. The flame of this hearth demands its food. And if we refuse to offer human victims there and at the same time do not desire to burn the heretic, we must discover other combustibles which could be offered to keep up the fire of common fervour.

A very elevated communion is proposed by art and that is at least a valuable indication. The typical art,

from this point of view, whose development we can understand, is the Greek tragedy. That it is derived from the Dionysiac rites and cult is well-known. The tragic hero takes the place of the sacred animal. He is the scapegoat who falls struck by the blow of Destiny. Evoking "terror" and "pity", tragedy is not so much the "catharsis" (purifier) of passions in general as a collective excitement. It touches on one side the plays of the circus and on the other side the mystery of the Passion.

But it is not enough to speak of art and believe that everything has been said, as if it were a magic word. Art also is subject to all the regressions; it descends into all the depths, and collective art, the art of the theatre, about which we shall specially consider here, is more menacing than others by those rapid falls, precisely because it brings into play more than others the psychology of the crowd which remains a scandal to reason, as we have already remarked.

Through the films we can determine the myths of the public who hail them. Rapidity, deceit, machine, brutal force—these, diversely combined, constitute from all evidence the myth of the public. (By *myth* we mean a collective faith projected on some privileged symbols, which furnish for it the matter of its cults and its "sacrifices".)

Thus it does not seem wise to propose purely and simply as a substitute for a declining religion, the communions of the art under the idea that they will be, by definition, more elevated than the plays of the circus. The elevation of art depends on the elevation of the "myths" on which

it is built. The decline of the religious sentiment in a given group tends to the formation of a new myth; it is on this that the art of the group rests; if the myth is gross, the art cannot be less gross.

Of the myths of a people, of its excitements and communions, it can truly be said what one has said of the passion, of romanticism, mysticism and everything irrational. It is above and below the human. And when it is not above, it is necessarily below. One false step is enough. We have to ask sincerely whether our civilisation has taken this false step, and, if so, when and why.

The loss of faith in an individual is a crisis which does not come without repercussions and crashes of ruin prolonged in the caverns of the being. When it is a society which loses the faith on which it is constructed, we can gauge the dangers of the imminent fall. The new faiths, the new myths, on which that society then seeks to anchor itself and to accept as a substitute are, in nine cases out

of ten, very ancient faiths, very archaic and barbarous myths, of which the modern mask cannot long deceive a cautious eye. It is then that we should be vigilant.

It is then that the spiritual problem again comes to the forefront. It cannot be avoided by subterfuges, or patchings. Every 'new' ideal which is greatly attached to the old gods of the race and the blood is a false pretence. The affective regression, which explains the neurosis of the individual, explains also the collective neurosis. It is then that we should propose to the people a new way of sentimental elevation; it is then that we need an authentic spiritual creation, a very new and very pure appeal which draws the tribe far away from the fascination of the sanguinary scene around which it often secretly, in its ancestral memory, in its previously formed being, centres. When the altar is void, all the old idols are there, ready to remount grimacingly. And their grin once more reclaims the victims.

MEDITATIONS: DIVINE PRESENCE

By Anilbaran Ray

[Sj. Anilbaran Ray of Sri Arobindo Asram, Pondicherry gives herein his reflection on the subject from the point of view of a spiritual aspirant.]

THOU art so near to me, my Lord, living in the heart of my heart, yet in my ignorance I think Thee to be so distant, so far away separated from me.

Thou art with me every moment of my life, standing by me in my joy and my sorrow, in my glory and my shame, in my virtue and my sin. Thou art always supporting me,

cheering me, with the utmost care, leading me out of misery and darkness to joy and light, yet in my ignorance I think that I am a helpless mortal wandering alone on the earth, that Thou dost not at all care for me, dost not even think of me.

Thou art seeking my love and homage in infinite ways; Thou appearest before me in various guises in the

world and attractest me towards Thee; (Whichever way I may turn, Thou always placest Thyself in my front, yet in my ignorance blindfolded, I can see Thee nowhere and live in misery.

Now I do realise that Thou art more near and dear to me than what I regard to be my own self, Thou takest more care of me than ever I can take of myself. In the form of the Divine Mother Thou hast come to me, my Lord, and openly declared Thy love—all my misery has ended I consciously own Thee now as my best Beloved.

Mother is coming to you, my soul, give up all your preoccupations, clear away all obstacles, make your temple clean and pure. The queen of queens, the Supreme Mother is coming to you, my soul, welcome her with all the devotion of your heart.

Mother has given me her assurance, she has said to me in her divine voice, "Fear nothing, care for nothing, give your love and devotion to Me, I shall take care of you, I shall deliver you from all crises, I shall protect you absolutely from all danger and grief—I am coming to your heart, turn away from everything else and worship Me with your heart's devotion."

Yes, Mother, I shall be absolutely fearless and careless; I shall entrust my all, my life and soul into Thy hands and be delivered. Fill me with Thy presence, enter into every cell in my body, into every part of my consciousness, think with my every thought, move with my every movement, take up my whole being into Thy divine consciousness.

When will that day come, Mother, when I shall be a free, plastic, perfect channel of Thy divine play?

Thou art working wonders in me, Mother; I feel the greatness of Thy work though I am not fully conscious of the nature and the detail and though I may not be able adequately to express my experiences.

My defects and imperfections often come uppermost to my mind, whenever I try to speak to Thee; and it is right that it should be so as this is the only way of getting rid of them. By the touch of Thy Grace weakness turns into strength, defect turns into merit, pain turns into pleasure.

Thy work is becoming more and more evident in me as I steadily grow in faith and light, in peace and purity, in knowledge and power. But the great joy that arises from my personal devotion and love to Thee, Mother, where shall I find adequate words to describe it? But Thou Thyself art the source and knowest it too well—it gives me such an ecstasy as has absolutely no parallel on earth; Thy love is its own reward and I have not to wait for some future date for its fulfilment. It will sustain me in all my Sadhana and will carry me victoriously through all crises, all ordeals.

Thou art always with me, Mother, Thou art inside my heart and above my head; if ever I do not feel and realise Thy presence, that is entirely my fault due to a still lingering play of the old nature in me.

Thou art not only with me, but Thou art also helping me always to realise Thy presence and by all means trying to draw myself towards Thee.

Thou descendest into my mind in the form of luminous truths, Thou descendest into my work in the form of omnipotent will, Thou descendest into my heart removing all dryness from it, flooding it with the divine joy of Thy love. External nature, ever renewing its forms of beauty, indicates Thy play of self-manifestation in the universe. The infinite, immutable, silent sky pervading everything in nature takes me out of my finite ego and continually reminds me of my highest self from where I can truly realise Thy divine play. Thy Grace and protection is always with me, Mother, whether I am conscious of it or not.

If Thou hast given me so much, Mother, give me then the integral consciousness in which I shall be able always to feel Thy presence in me and make my whole life a conscious constant devotion to Thee.

I am emptying my heart and soul, Mother, so that Thou mayest fill me with Thy own self. Come to me in Thy fulness, come as Light, come as Power, come as Joy.

Descend into me as Light, dispel all darkness from me, fill me with the knowledge of truth, give me the insight by which I can always discriminate between truth and falsehood.

Come as power in the form of divine impulses, give me the strength to reject sternly all suggestions of falsehood, give me the power to execute only Thy will perfectly on earth.

Come as joy filling my heart with love and beauty. In all the sweetest sights and sounds on the earth let me recognise the expressions of Thy divine beauty.

That is how I shall recognise Thee everywhere, Mother, as light, as power, as pure and perfect joy; I shall persistently make myself free from all darkness and perversions so that Thou mayest fill me with Thy own self, Divine Mother.

Often I find Thee, Mother, more inside myself than outside; Thou enterest into me with all Thy majesty and grace filling me with Thy power and light and joy. It is then that my union with Thee becomes most intimate and Thou seemest to mingle with every part of my being.

This most happy state is to be made lasting and permanent; but the rushing out of my mind and the senses towards the external life is still a great obstacle and interruption. When I can withdraw myself from the outer consciousness and turn to the silent, Sakshi Purusha that is in me, when I find my real self to be delightful in its self-existence, wanting nothing, desiring nothing, then the disturbances of the lower life cease in me or appear to be quite outside myself, and established in the peace and the purity of the inner self, I can fully open my individual nature to Thee, Mother, and intimately receive Thee within me.

As Thy light dawns in me, my consciousness becomes more and more pure and peaceful and clear, and I am ceaselessly aspiring for the condition when I shall get Thee permanently inside myself, completely mingling with and transforming every part of my being.

Thou art continually working in and through me, Mother, Thou art always pressing upon me from above;

yet in my ignorance I think that Thou art far away from me, I fear Thou art not taking care of Thy child. Shut up in my egoism, I do not feel Thy presence and thus cannot live in direct and conscious union with Thee, though Thou art always with me.

When I feel great joy in my work, it is the expression of Thy will through me. When my whole being becomes filled with gladness, it is the touch of Thy love on me. When my darkness is dispelled by inner illumination, it is the appearance of Thy light in me. Yet I think that all these are only movements of my egoistic self; Thus I cannot live in direct and conscious union with Thee, Mother, though Thou art always working in me.

When I fall into error and yield to the suggestions of falsehood, when moments from the outside world move and disturb me, when my defects and imperfections rise up in magnified forms, it is only the result of the spirit of perfection working in me. Yet I fear Mother; thus I cannot live in conscious union with Thee, Mother, though Thou art always pressing upon me from above.

Remove this egoism and ignorance from me, Mother, let me tear away the veil that separates me from Thyself, let me feel Thy touch in all my movements, at every moment of my life, let me constantly live in Yoga with Thee, Mother, who art guiding my whole life seated within the heart of my heart.

THE TASK BEFORE A SPIRITUAL ASPIRANT

By Swami Yatiswarananda

[These are the notes of the Class-talks given by Swami Yatiswarananda to a group of spiritual aspirants in Wiesbaden, Germany.]

“UNTIL you fall asleep or until you die, devote yourself to Vedantic thought.” Go on striving for the higher life. Do not give the slightest opportunity to your desires and passions for upsetting you and making your mind outgoing.

The greatest struggle is to maintain the steady flow of the undercurrent of thought, to keep one's mind fixed on the goal. The undercurrent always protects you. We may crack harmless jokes and all that, but always this undercurrent is to be maintained. Our jokes must never be immoral or loose or in any way of a doubtful nature, and we must never listen to

such jokes when other people indulge in them. We must always be dignified and not allow others to make dirty jokes. In this, we must learn to impose our will on others or leave the place. Listening to - a joke of a doubtful or loose nature is very bad for all aspirants, and should be strictly avoided.

An atmosphere must be created that does not allow others to become intimate with us, which prevents them from doing or saying anything dirty in our presence, whatever they may do when they are left to themselves.

This gives us strength. Bad thoughts vitiate the air, and we must purify ourselves as well as others by good thoughts. This is never to be lost sight of. We have to shoulder that responsibility and cannot allow others to behave as they like so long as they are in our company. If they do not conform to our standards, we have to avoid them. Never pollute the mind of another with your bad sensual thoughts or bad sensual vibrations. Even if another person feels drawn towards you in a sensual way, you are responsible for it, and you will have to bear the reaction. So always be on your guard. If you are not fully guarded, you too will have to pay for it just as the other person,—you too will be subject to the reactions of those impure thoughts in him, of which you were the cause or the occasion.

Is Brahman altogether out of touch with us? Is it a fact that we know nothing of It, get no glimpse of It? So long as there is false identification and this false sense of personality, Brahman cannot be realized. There is this false identification, and during the time of this identification we see we are shifting our centre of consciousness continually. Sometimes we identify ourselves with the body and say, "O, I am hurt. I feel such pain (physical);" sometimes with the mind and say, "O, So-and-so was so rude to me. I feel so worried; I feel sorry; I feel interested." All this is wrong identification with men and things and the 'I' is the common factor in this identification. 'I', 'I', 'I'—always this 'I' comes in different forms. And so long as this 'I' lasts, we cannot get a glimpse of Brahman. But there is one point to note. Even at

the time of this wrong identification, we have the consciousness of something that abides. At the back of this wrong 'I', there is something that does not change. And it is the task of the spiritual man to find out what that really is. Everybody wants to live eternally, even people trying to commit suicide do not want to get rid of life but of all the anxieties and worries of life. What they really want is a pleasant life, not no-life. We want to live eternally and happily. Nobody wants to live eternally like stocks and stones, but wants to lead an intelligent life. Nobody has before him the ideal of living among sorrows and miseries. Inordinate craving for the pleasures of life makes people commit suicide. In everybody there is always this yearning for peace, for blessedness, for freedom. And we all do not want to be disturbed by cares and anxieties.

Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, says the seer, is the nature of our soul, not its attributes, not its Upadhis. These—Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute—are the very essence of our soul, our true nature. And when we analyse the outside world, too, we find the same thing standing at the back of all phenomena. Everything, sentient and insentient, living and non-living, stands before us as an object of consciousness—as something that is. And every being and thing has the capacity to force itself on our consciousness, a sort of luminosity about it that illumines the sentient and the insentient. There is no difference in kind, but only of degree. So in the world inside and in the world outside, we find this abiding sense of consciousness, and thus a glimpse of the Reality. All

things more or less fulfil the want of every individual. We all run after the sense-objects, the things outside, for the satisfaction of our mind or in search of some particular sense-pleasure which we think we shall derive from the possession of that thing, whatever its nature may be. The sense of consciousness is always there. Sense-objects only draw our mind because of the idea that we are going to derive some enjoyment from them. It is because of this that we feel tempted, not because of the intrinsic value of that particular sense-object. Thus not merely in ourselves, but also in all outside objects, sentient and non-sentient, we get a glimpse of what may be called Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. Name and form hide the face of Truth in ourselves and in all outside objects, but all names and forms reflect dimly the glory of the Reality at their back. Always there is a subconscious feeling with regard to this real existence. It may be very vague, very indefinite, but still it is there.

The task of all spiritual life is to make the indefinite consciousness definite, if we really want to come face to face with Truth. First we should begin with ourselves, find out that which exists in ourselves at the back of our ego.

There is such a thing as having one's centre of consciousness in the Transcendental even while working or living on the phenomenal plane, but this can never be done so long as all this wrong identification with our body and our mind lasts.

Very often we identify ourselves with the Upadhis (limiting adjuncts). We say or think: We are fat; we are lean; we are clever; we are poor; we

are rich; we walk; we sit; we are blind, deaf, dumb; we are men or women, etc.; or we identify ourselves with some feeling that rises in the lake of our mind. This is wrong, although we may note the one common factor, this 'I'. What is this 'I'? No thought of the finite is ever possible without the thought of the Infinite. Positing one, you posit the other, too. We cannot formulate the infinite Pure Consciousness, the Atman; It can never be formulated, but It can be realized.

"The Truth can be realized by him whom It chooses and to whom It reveals Itself." You are thus yourself your own chooser, as this Self, this Truth is not something distinct from you; and really if you go and choose yourself to be the knower of the Truth, strive for It, you become It. Spiritual realisation means self-realisation.

Only by rising above our lusts and passions can we become one with It. See that you get purity and dispassion. "Give me discrimination, give me renunciation, give me devotion and knowledge." This was Swamiji's prayer.

"Be bold and face the Truth." There must be merciless self-analysis. First of all try to find and to regain your own soul. Your soul is practically lost to you, and only after having found it again, the question of this higher realisation will arise, otherwise never.

Spiritual life begins with the recognition of the idea that we are neither men nor women but spiritual entities. And it is necessary to have this as the very basis of all our striving.

The path of self-analysis is always difficult but it is the most direct of all

the paths, and even the devotee (Bhakta) must practise self-analysis to a certain extent, though his Sadhana is sweetened through devotion.

It is necessary for us to have a true conception of freedom. Do we want freedom *from* the senses, or do we want freedom *of* the senses? Which is the right idea of freedom? Is it freedom to allow the mind to run after enjoyment, to be the slave of the senses? Is it freedom thus to dig our own graves? Or is it freedom to control all desires, to master all desires, and become free from the senses and their cravings? This alone is what is called 'attaining to the freedom of the Atman'; the freedom of license is no freedom at all. Do we really want freedom? That is the question.

The question of spiritual practice comes, when to some extent we become free agents. And as a matter of fact, with this alone does spiritual life begin.

"They are the killers of their own souls" (Upanishads). Those who forget their souls, their reality, are the killers of their souls, as it were, because they do not possess them. So long as we go on clinging to our slave-mentality and allow ourselves to be driven like slaves by our senses, we cannot progress. Only the life of sense-control and purity leads to freedom and no other life. There is no doubt about that, whatever the worldly-minded may say or think.

"Even if you doubt your own existence, the doubter is no other than yourself" (Sankara).

Descartes said, "*Cogito, ergo sum*" (I think, therefore I am). Sankara

says, "Because I am, it becomes possible for me to think."

If you want Vedanta, then here it is, but then be bold and face the Truth. There is no romance and no place for romance in spiritual life, neither materially nor mentally; it is a hard life, a life of struggle and strain.

There are people who have the experience of the world, and others who have the experience of the Spirit. But can worldly-minded people, possessing only their experience of the world, talk about spiritual life and experience? They only rush headlong into sense-life and find some nice and plausible excuse for doing so.

Sri Ramakrishna says, "Blind faith? There are no such thing. There is only faith or experience."

There must be great intensity of feeling and will, and you must keep your fire burning with the bellows. Everyone has to do that. The moment there is no intensity nothing can be achieved. We are free agents and can choose ourselves for emancipation. Truth is realized when the mind is purified and the senses are stilled.

"Speak to my warring passions
peace;

Let my trembling heart be still."
(Elliot)

When our will is weakened, then enemies come from all sides to play at tug-of-war with us. And then we are in great danger of being defeated.

Let us will that our passions may be stilled, that our desires may be controlled.

SRI KRISHNA AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(A COMPARATIVE STUDY)

By Swami Pranavesananda

[Swami Pranavesananda, President of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Mysore shows herein how the teachings of these two great men of India are practically the same inspite of the great distance in time between them.]

INTRODUCTORY

BY a comparative study of the teachings of Sri Krishna and Sri Ramakrishna one cannot but be impressed with certain remarkable resemblances between them both, although each of them played a different part in accordance with the needs of their respective times. For example, Sri Krishna sanctified all duties—from the duties of a learned Brahmin down to those of an illiterate Chandala. To work with non-attachment in their respective provinces of life was a peculiar demand of his age; for society was then entirely misguided by excessive emphasis laid on the injunctions of Mimamsa, viz., to work with an eye to material gain and heavenly rewards. Although Sri Ramakrishna also taught mankind to work in the world without attachment, he laid more stress on the harmonising of all sects and religions; for the quarrelling sects and warring nations of the world to-day have to be united in one bond of love and amity. He found that the practice of reverence and regard for every religion and spiritual culture of the world was the only sure way to re-establish peace in this world to-day. It is not that Sri Krishna did not preach this harmony; there is enough evidence in the Gita that he did so, which I shall presently show in the course of this article, but

the outstanding demand of his age was otherwise.

DESTROYING WEAKNESS

Both Sri Krishna and Sri Ramakrishna destroyed all weakness in their disciples. When Arjuna, smitten with grief and sorrow at the impending danger of losing his kinsmen, refused to fight in the battle of Kurukshetra, Sri Krishna condemned his weakness masked over by religious expressions, and in order that his weakness may be destroyed for ever he gave him the highest knowledge of the Atman. Whereupon Arjuna giving up all fear and weakness, fought the battle and won a clear victory over his formidable foes. So also Sri Ramakrishna, whenever he detected any weakness on the part of his disciples, he dispelled it by the method of his unique training and also by imparting to them the knowledge of the Atman by mere touch, with the result that His disciples became spiritual heroes of a very high order and conquerors of hearts and founders of a world-wide organisation with its multifarious activities of public utility.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Sri Krishna says:

“One should not unsettle the understanding of the ignorant attached to action. The wise, themselves steadily

acting, should engage the ignorant in all work. The Gunas of Prakriti perform all action. With the understanding deluded by egoism, man thinks 'I am the doer'. But one with true insight into the domain of Guna and Karma, knowing that Gunas as senses merely rest on Gunas as objects, does not become attached. Men of perfect knowledge should not unsettle the understanding of people of dull wit and imperfect knowledge, who, deluded by the Gunas of Prakriti, attach themselves to the functions of the Gunas." What the Lord means here is that every one should grow according to the law of one's own nature. The wise man has no right to hasten the steps of the ignorant by premature advice which, instead of doing good, may harm him. The only thing the wise man can do is to set an example himself, and by keeping his ideal before them help others to lift themselves from where they are.

The same characteristic was noticeable in Sri Ramakrishna who time and again asked his disciples not to disturb the faith of others in the same way as Sri Krishna did in his Gita. Let every one follow his own nature and work out his own Karma. A time will come when love of God will overtake him and break the barriers of nature. Sri Ramakrishna says: "When the hearing of the holy name of God makes one's hairs to stand on ends, one has no more work to do." It is in the very nature of one's being to realise God one day or other, if not in this birth, in some other birth. So there is no use of hurrying and thereby unsettling the understanding of another. When one day Swami Vivekananda, by a touch,

transferred his spiritual power prematurely to another, Sri Ramakrishna reprimanded him severely. The result was that the man had a premature growth and consequent disturbance of faith in his own line of Sadhana which he gave up immediately. Such a premature growth in religion is attended with disastrous results. Such a man not only loses his own ground but also will have the tendency to misguide others in the path of religion.

WORK FOR THE GUIDANCE OF THE WORLD

Although Arjuna was a Jnanin and a man of purified intellect and wanted to renounce the world to avoid the horrible consequences of the war, Bhagavan Sri Krishna asked him to be a Karma Yogin and fight at least with a view to the guidance of this world; for says He: "Whatever the superior person does, that is followed by others; whatever a great man, a leader demonstrates by action, that people follow." He then cites His own example. Although He Himself had no duty to perform, had nothing to gain in all the three worlds by work, yet He continued doing actions; otherwise people would follow in His wake and the world would perish.

This sounds exactly like Sri Ramakrishna exhorting Swami Vivekananda to be up and doing. When Swamiji asked for the blessing of plunging himself in Nirvikalpa Samadhi like another Suka Deva, Sri Ramakrishna dissuaded him from that self-seeking path, avoiding the good of the many. He definitely told him that the Divine Mother had commissioned him to do much work in the world. Swami Vivekananda,

although he had the highest realisation of a Jnani and could have easily merged himself in Samadhi, had to perform the work which marked him as one of the greatest Karma Yogins and won him the everlasting gratitude of humanity. Truly as Sri Ramakrishna prophesied, Swamiji became a huge banyan tree under whose shade many a weary soul is taking shelter to-day.

TAKING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OTHERS

The same intense love for man is discerned in both. While reading that portion of the 12th Chapter of the Gita, wherein Bhagavan Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to fix his mind and place his intellect on Him in order that he may live in Him for ever, and gives him alternatives one after the other to enable him to do so, one is reminded of Sri Ramakrishna's taking the 'Power of Attorney' under similar circumstances from Girish Chandra Ghose, that great dramatist saint of Bengal, when the latter thought within himself that he would not be able to repeat the holy name of God as advised by Sri Ramakrishna even once in a day owing to his various pre-occupations of life and multifarious worldly entanglements. Says Sri Krishna to Arjuna, "If you are unable to fix your mind on me, do so through Abhyasa. If Abhyasa is not possible for you, do actions for Me. If you cannot do this also, then take refuge in Me and abandon the fruits of whatever actions you do to Me." This is the same as Sri Ramakrishna's saying to Girish Chandra Ghose, "Give me your Power of Attorney."

In another place Sri Krishna asks Arjuna:—

"Relinquishing all Dharmas take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate Thee from all sins; grieve not."

It is only the Avatars like Sri Krishna and Sri Ramakrishna that have this unique power of taking the whole responsibility of other souls on themselves; other spiritual teachers perhaps may, by their own example, lead others to the same path of Divinity, which they themselves tread.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE THREE GUNAS

Sri Krishna says: "Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—these Gunas, born of Prakriti, bind fast the Indestructible embodied in the body."

He also mentions the respective binding effects of these three Gunas. "Of them Tamas born of ignorance, delusive to all embodied beings, binds fast the Jiva with miscomprehension, indolence and sleep. Rajas, which is of the nature of passion giving rise to thirst and attachment, binds him to action. Sattva, which is of a luminous nature and free from evil and stainless, binds one to attachment to happiness and knowledge. Man becomes freed from birth, decay and pain, and attains to Immortality when he crosses beyond these Gunas."

In the same way Sri Ramakrishna, in one of his parables, compares these three Gunas of Nature to three robbers attacking a traveller in a thick forest. Jiva or the individual soul is the traveller, and this world is the wilderness; Self-knowledge is his treasure. Tamas tries to destroy the Jiva; Rajas binds him with the fetters of the world; but the Sattva protects him from the actions of Rajas and Tamas. By taking refuge

in Sattva, the Jiva becomes free from lust, anger and delusion which are the effects of Tamas; Sattva also emancipates the Jiva from the bondage of the world. But Sattva itself is also a robber. It cannot give divine wisdom or the knowledge of the Absolute. It leads one, however, up to the path of the Supreme Abode and then it says: "Behold, there is your home." Then it disappears. Even Sattva cannot enter the Absolute, that is to say, one has to go beyond these three Gunas in order to attain Immortality.

There is absolutely no difference in their views about these three Gunas and their binding effect. Only Sri Ramakrishna presents the fact in a very beautiful parable.

THE CAUSE OF BONDAGE

All great men trace the cause of worldly bondage to lust and greed. Says Sri Krishna: "Tripple is the gate to hell—lust, anger and greed. One should give them up." "The man who has gone beyond these three gates of darkness and practises what is good for himself, goes to the Supreme Goal." "It is desire—it is anger, born of Rajoguna, of great craving and sin; know this as the foe in this world." "As fire is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo by the womb, this knowledge is covered by the unquenchable fire of desire—the constant foe of man." "The seat of desire is the senses, the mind and intellect. By controlling and fixing our mind on God, we can conquer desire."

Woman and gold, said Sri Ramakrishna, keep men immersed in worldliness and away from God. Those who have any wish to attain God and

make progress in religious devotion should particularly guard themselves against the snares of lust and wealth.

His method of conquering lust and gold was unique. He himself demonstrated in his own life how this practice of renunciation can be carried to its logical conclusion. At the touch of a coin his whole body would become paralysed as it were; the face of every woman to him was that of the Divine Mother. He would prostrate even before a woman whom society would consider lowest, and would cry: "O Mother, in one form Thou art in the street, in another form Thou art worshipped in the temple. I salute Thee, Mother, I salute Thee."

Sri Krishna's method of conquest is through analysis of mind and meditation, but Sri Ramakrishna gives us a method whereby we can practise this renunciation of lust and gold in our work-a-day life and become divine.

BHAKTI AS THE EASIEST PATH

Sri Krishna says in Chapter XII of his Gita that the worship of the Personal God, i.e., the path of Bhakti, is easier than that of the Impersonal, i.e., the path of Jnana. No doubt the worshippers of both reach the same goal, but the trouble of those whose minds are set on the Unmanifested is greater; for the goal of the Unmanifested is very hard for the embodied to reach. The Lord, therefore, advocates for the embodied beings the worship of the personal aspects of God. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna also teaches us likewise. "All Yogas—Karma, Jnana or Bhakti—lead to the same God; but the path of devotion or self-surren-

der to God is the easiest of all paths, for pure work without attachment is exceedingly difficult in this age. In the first place there is hardly time in this age to do the various works laid upon us by the Scriptures. In the second place although one resolves in his mind to do work unattached without expectation of any reward or fear of punishment in this world or the next, the chances are that, knowingly or unknowingly, he gets attached to the fruits of work unless of course he is a perfect man already. The path of Jnana is also exceedingly difficult, firstly our life is Annagata, i.e., depending entirely on material food; secondly the duration of life is too short for this purpose; and thirdly it is impossible to get rid of Dehabuddhi, i.e., the consciousness of this body. Hence the path of Bhakti is the easiest of all, for it reduces work to a minimum and teaches the necessity of prayer without cessation." Some are of opinion that the devotee is rather indifferent to the sufferings of the people. It is not so. Why? There are some earnest souls who are ideal devotees of the Gita in whom love bursts forth with an intense desire to suffer for humanity. Through Bhakti a devotee can also realise his identity with Brahman just like the Gopis.

PRACTICAL RELIGION

The Western people thought that India's religion was mainly responsible for India's general apathy to work. They thought that India's religion laid undue emphasis on renunciation and other-worldliness. The enjoyments of the world are only of two days' duration—why run after these ephemeral joys?

That is why they said that India had become proverbially inactive and devoid of all zeal for work. If we examine this statement in the light of the teachings of the Gita, we find that their notion is quite incorrect. The author of the Gita not only repeatedly goads us to work, but also teaches us how to work. Says he, "Yoga is dexterity in work." We have to work in this world without attachment to reward or punishment, with mastery over one's body, senses and mind. Sri Krishna himself demonstrates it in his own life that the ideal man is he who is intensely active within the body but is all calmness in his mind. Says Sri Krishna: "One who sees action in inaction and inaction in action, he is intelligent amongst men, he is a Yogi and doer of all actions."

Sri Ramakrishna also made Vedanta practical in all fields of life and planes of existence. Before his advent Vedanta was being worked out only by Sannyasins and recluses on the plane of spirituality in caves and forests. He on the other hand showed that the truths of religion can be practised by one and all, not only by Sannyasins but also by students and householders in the midst of their sorrows and troubles, in their happiness and misery, in their days of plenty and penury. Even his own spiritual practices were carried on by him not in a forest or any out of the way corner but in a temple where devotees throng in numbers daily to pay their homage to the Divine Mother, thus demonstrating to the world that one need not necessarily repair to the jungle for religious practices, and that these can safely and quietly be gone through in the

din and bustle of life. He was practical even to the minutest details of life. Although Samadhi was a natural state of his mind and would come over him several times a day, he would not forget to attend to the minor details of life with utmost carefulness. Indeed the great life of Sri Ramakrishna shows in unmistakable terms that even a man in the highest rung of the spiritual ladder is never a mass of inactivity but intensely practical in life.

HARMONY OF DIFFERENT FAITHS

Sri Krishna attempts to synthesise in the Gita the different schools of Vedanta philosophy, Sankhya doctrines, Mimamsa injunctions and Bhakti cults prevailing at his time, and correct their extravagances. That is why we find in it conflicting views about the means of discipline and end of freedom. Yet he harmonises them all and shows the exact place and value of each of them.

"In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way do I fulfil their desires; It is my path, O son of Pritha, that men tread, in all ways."

"Even those devotees, who, endued with Shraddha, worship other gods, they too worship Me alone, but by the wrong method. For I alone am the Enjoyer, the Lord of all Yajnas, but because they do not know Me in reality they return to the mortal world."

The Gita recognises that the one Infinite God can be approached and worshipped through any of his aspects. Through this tolerant spirit, Sri Krishna has made Hinduism a synthesis of different kinds of worship and spiritual experience, a harmony of all cults, creeds and systems

of spiritual culture, based on the fact that the one Truth has many aspects.

In one verse, Bhagavan Sri Krishna harmonises all the three schools of Vedanta, viz., Advaita, Dvaita and Visishtadvaita:

"Others, too, sacrificing by the Yajna of knowledge (i.e., seeing the Self in all) worship Me the All-formed, as one, as distinct, as manifold."

"One" means here identifying himself with the All-formed; this is clearly an Advaitic view. "Distinct" means making a distinction between the worshipped (God) and the worshipper—this is the Dualistic view. "Manifold" means immanent in all beings—this is Visishtadvaitic view. There are other passages too which indicate clearly that the Lord in his Gita has preached a wonderful harmony between all these schools of philosophy.

Sri Ramakrishna beautifully reconciles in one illustration Advaita, Visishtadvaita and Dvaita viewpoints. Once Sri Ramachandra asked his devotee, Hanuman, how he looked upon him. Hanuman replied, "O Lord, when I think I am inseparable from the body, I regard myself as Thy servant and Thyself as my Divine Master. When I consider myself an individual soul separate from the body, I think I am a part of Thee, and Thou art the Whole. When I look upon myself as pure spirit beyond body and thought, I am no other than Thyself, the Eternal and the Infinite." In this one saying of Sri Ramakrishna is demonstrated how the idea of God evolves. They are not contradictory but complementary to each other.

Similarly Sri Krishna harmonises the paths of Meditation, Jnana, Karma and Bhakti. He says: "Some by meditation behold the Self in their own intelligence by the purified heart, others by the path of Knowledge, others again by Karma Yoga. Others again not knowing thus, worship as they have heard from others. Even these cross beyond death, regarding what they have heard as their Supreme Refuge."

So Sri Krishna harmonised all these apparently conflicting statements and different paths to the one goal. But although during his life time he attempted to combine these different forces, as there was no practical sanction behind such unity, the sects went on with their campaign of mutual hatred and fight till India became hopelessly divided and fell an easy prey to foreign conquerors. In order to remedy this evil, immensely magnified by the passage of time, and to effect a solid unity among the different peoples of India, the merciful Sri Krishna came again in the form of Sri Ramakrishna and practically demonstrated the truth of his statements. It was Sri Ramakrishna who first exemplified it in his life and taught that not only these contradictory statements are meant

for different grades of aspirants but also showed by his own life that every religion is a path to God-head. He not only harmonised but also kept the door open for synthesising all religious ideas that might crop up in future; for human mind is ever progressing and broadening, and with a widened outlook of life the spiritual ideas must also advance with it. In the light of these teachings the followers of all religions of the world will recognise that all the Prophets reached the same truth, and as such the differences will be forgotten and unity will be established between the different creeds and sects not only in India but throughout the whole world. India to-day is the home of all religions, and in order to meet the demands of this age it looks as if the same Sri Krishna who united the different sects and aspects within the fold of Hinduism, came again as Sri Ramakrishna in order to show that the religion of the Hindus is universal, and has in it the monotheistic view of the Islamic religion and the dualistic aspect of the Christian religion, and can easily absorb all the religions in its fold, just as Sankara made it possible for Buddhism to be absorbed into Hinduism.

THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on divine love form one of the most inspiring Chapters in India's religious literature.]

SUTRAS 39 to 42

The last Sutra showed us how the grace of God acting through saints

is necessary for spiritual culture. The topic is further continued in the next four Sutas.

महत्संगस्तु दुर्लभोऽगम्योऽमोघश्च ॥ ३१ ॥

महत्संगः the company of the great men तु but दुर्लभः extremely difficult to obtain अगम्यः subtle and incomprehensible अमोघः unerringly effective or infallible च and

39. But it is extremely ¹ difficult to come into contact with a great soul and to benefit by his company. His influence is subtle ² and incomprehensible. Nevertheless it is unerringly ³ infallible in its effect.

Notes 1. Extremely difficult etc.— The Sutra administers a warning to the unwary and the lazy-minded not to be misled, in their anxiety to avoid the trouble of strenuous Sadhana, into accepting anybody and everybody as a Guru and then leaving everything to his grace. For men of true spiritual enlightenment are indeed very rare. As the Gita puts it, it is only one in a thousand that struggles for realisation, and even among such aspirants only one in a thousand succeeds in realising God. Besides this paucity of these great men, other circumstances like distance, illness, poverty, opposition of other members of the family, add to the difficulties of the aspirants in coming into contact with them. In addition to these, just as there are great chances of a person being deceived by false Gurus, so too there is every likelihood of one failing to recognise the true worth of great men even after coming into contact with them. For they generally hide their greatness, and their behaviour may even repel one by its queerness, if, as stated in Sutra 6 of

these texts, they sometimes look like law breakers, fools, drunkards and lunatics. It is in view of these difficulties that contact with truly illuminated souls is said to accrue only from the religious merit earned by hard spiritual practices. *Vide Gita VII. 28. Katha Up. III. 14.* The lazy and indolent have therefore no chance, for contact with them is the legitimate consequence of earnest spiritual struggle.

2. *Subtle and incomprehensible.*— It is only very seldom that saints condescend to accept anybody consciously as a disciple and give him the necessary training. But they do exert a subtle kind of influence on all who come into contact with them knowingly or unknowingly. As Emerson puts it, "It costs a beautiful person no exertion to paint her image on our eyes. It costs no more for the wise soul to convey his quality to other men. With the great, our thoughts and manners become equally great. There needs but one wise man in a company and all are wise. Great men are a collyrium to clear one's eyes of egotism; this is the key to the power of great men—their power diffuses itself." This unconscious and unintentional conversion of one mind by another is something mysterious and miraculous. People are often surprised when an extremely wicked man is suddenly transformed into a good citizen for no apparent reason. Such things are possible because of this subtle influence of saints. Sometimes it is exerted through their writings or songs. Swami Vivekananda has told us how the spiritual waves set up by a saintly soul often travel long distances of time and space until it

gets a proper receiving instrument just as the ether waves wait for a radio. Instances also are not rare of people being influenced by a look or a touch of such saintly souls. It is beyond ordinary reason and common-sense to understand how even hard-hearted and perverse men could be moved by such innocent acts as the fasts of a man like Gandhiji.

3. *Unerringly infallible in effect*—No doubt it is difficult to come into contact with a saint, but once we come into contact either by chance or as a result of previous merits, something like spiritual gravitation drags our mind irresistibly higher and higher towards the centre of all attraction, viz., God. This influence may not be always consciously felt as in the case of a tonic. But one cannot help becoming a devotee in the long run. Thus unerringness need not necessarily mean an immediate transformation.

लभ्यतेऽपि तत्कृपयैव ॥ ४० ॥

अपि Nevertheless लभ्यते is attained तत्कृपया by their grace एव only.

40. Nevertheless it is attained by their grace alone.

Notes—One need not however despair of getting a proper Guru. For it is said that the Divine Power working everywhere in the world takes a Guru of the right type to a true spiritual aspirant as in the case of Sri Ramakrishna. Even if the aspirant is not able to find out the greatness of a realised man, the latter who has become one with God can easily find out a deserving disciple. Let the aspirant therefore do everything in his power to make himself deserving of such grace and then

make a sincere effort to seek out his saviour. In fact, it is the grace of God that makes the meeting of Guru and disciple possible. The same God is present in the hearts of both. It is he who makes the aspirant restlessly and sincerely active in his search for a Guru. It is He again who makes the saint restlessly active in going about in search of deserving disciples and bestow his blessings on all who are fit. He is the wire-puller behind the scenes, and the teacher and the disciple are somehow mysteriously brought together when the time is ripe, by His grace.

तस्मिंस्तत्रने भेदाभावात् ॥ ४१ ॥

तस्मिन् In Him तत्रने in His creatures भेदाभावात् because of absence of difference.

41. Because in Him there is no difference between any two objects of the universe.

Notes—We are all one in God, for everything is His manifestation. Looked at through the eyes of God or saints, all are God. He is present everywhere in all His glory, in lifeless matter and intelligent man, in saint and sinner. He cannot therefore be partial to anybody and His grace is available to all equally. It is always working in the hearts of everybody urging them to higher and higher perfection. It is we who put obstacles in the way of the natural working of His grace to its logical end. Let us be sincere in our aspiration for perfection, let us not intrude ourselves on His grace, let us surrender ourselves, heart and soul to it, and spiritual growth becomes natural and easy.

तदेव साध्यतां तदेवसाध्यताम् ॥ ४२ ॥

तद् that एव alone साध्यताम् is to be attained by practice.

42. That alone is to be effected by spiritual practice.

Notes—We have only to take our hands off, and refuse to put obstacle in the path of the Lord's grace by complete self-surrender. We have only to allow free play to it and it will guide us to our natural birth-right, with or without the mediation of an external stimulus. The external stimulus is only secondary and it may not work unless the primary condition of an unconditional and sincere acceptance of the guidance of the inner voice of God is accepted by complete surrender of individuality and egoistic impulses. On the other hand, if this self-surrender, known as Prapatti, is once effected, the whole world becomes a help to us in our spiritual life, and the whole of Nature will supply the necessary stimulus; for it is not different in any way from God to whose grace the aspirant has surrendered himself. Let the aspirant therefore see God in everything and serve everything as God Himself, and divine help and inspiration will come to him. The sincere aspirant does not therefore suffer for want of proper external stimulus in the form of a Guru. The whole of Nature is as Guru and he is always in the company of God. *Vide Bhagavatam XI. 14.13.*

दुःसंगः सर्वथैव त्याज्यः ॥ ४३ ॥

दुःसंगः Evil company सर्वथा by all means त्याज्यः is to be shunned एव only.

43. Evil company however is fit only to be shunned by all means.

Notes—It is true that God is everywhere, even in an evil-minded man and in objects likely to excite passion. But this does not mean that one should voluntarily resort to such persons or things. Nor can one afford to be careless about one's surroundings and associations. In the early stages of the Sadhana one should not trust oneself in the midst of temptations. All times and places, persons and things that are likely to rouse selfish passions must be carefully avoided. Only when one finds it unavoidable, one may take shelter by seeing only God in them also.

कामक्रोधमोहस्युतिभ्रंशबुद्धिनाश-

कारणत्वाद् ॥ ४४ ॥

44. For it leads to the rousing up of desire, anger and delusion, and to loss of memory¹ to loss of discrimination² and utter ruin in the end.

Notes.—*Vide Gita II. 62 and 63. Bhagavatam, XI. 14.27 to 30.*

1. *Loss of memory*—Refers to forgetfulness of one's object in life as well as one's duty.

2. *Loss of discrimination*—i.e., discrimination of right and wrong.

तरङ्गायिता अपीमे तरङ्गासमुद्रायन्ति ॥ ४५ ॥

इमे These तरङ्गायिताः अपि though only of the form of ripples संगत् by evil association समुद्रायन्ति become like a sea.

45. Though only in the form of ripples in the beginning, they

become like a veritable sea as a result of evil company.

Notes—In the beginning they may be easily controlled, but once they

become agitated like a stormy sea through the tempest of passion roused by evil company, there is no further hope of escape from being drowned in the ocean of Samsara.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Critical Examination of the Philosophy of Religion (in two Volumes): By Sadhu Santinath. Published by the Manager, Institute of Philosophy, P. O. Amalner (E. Kandesh).

It is with a sense of tragic gloom in our mind that we write these few lines by way of review of Sadhu Santinath's volumes. Here is a man who, as he says, began his spiritual career at the dawn of his youth; practised Bhakti Sadhana for ten years, Yoga Sadhana for three years and meditation according to non-dualistic method for about twelve years; attained Samadhi in which 'as I could remember or infer after waking, I became totally unaware of myself, the act of meditation and the said object'; then suffered from a severe pain in the head owing to excessive hardship and strain in the brain; as a result took to the study of philosophy as a diversion; found his philosophic studies unsettling the convictions he had previously attained through Samadhi and therefore lost faith in Samadhi as a means of attaining certainty; took to philosophic studies strenuously for long ten years in the belief that through logic, he could know truth positively and studied closely about a thousand original manuscripts from different libraries of different parts of India besides all available printed books; came to the conclusion that if one had no sectarian bias or dogmatic attitude, every metaphysical system would be found to be refuting every other system because of the logical fallacies inherent in all of them; became an inveterate agnostic; and then produced the present book, his *magnum opus* — a work of 1110 pages (Demi size) with the conclusion: "The inevitable destiny, to which the human understanding seems bound to submit is that it should stand amazed before the mysterious uni-

verse of experience; it should naturally feel an urge from within to attempt a rational solution of the mystery, and in this attempt it should be more and more deeply and widely acquainted with mysteries within mysteries and mysteries above mysteries, and that this acquaintance will tempt it for further and further search, and ultimately it should surrender itself to the consciousness that the mystery is insoluble."

This inability to reach any ultimate truth, Sadhuji maintains, has not created any despondency in his heart; he has come to the destined end of philosophical speculation, and he is fully satisfied with the result of his enquiry. However sure Sadhuji may now be with regard to the finality of his conclusion, we have a suspicion that sometime in the future he may feel dissatisfaction with regard to his present position as he once did with regard to his Samadhi intuitions, and then move on to convictions more positive in nature and more in agreement with results obtained by earnest spiritual aspirants all the world over.

With regard to the contents of these formidable volumes, we do not wish to say anything more than that it will form an excellent arsenal for the world's army of agnostics, atheists and naturalists to draw their weapons of offence from, in refuting and confuting every useful doctrine about the ultimate nature of things that has been bringing solace and illumination to spiritual aspirants through the ages. We do not want to insinuate that the author is in league with the said category of people; but we wonder why he felt called upon to offer the fruits of his labour to the world at large when he has really no fruits in stock, whether raw, ripe, rotten

or worm-eaten,—in other words why at all he felt so sure that mankind is in such urgent need of being informed of his feats of philosophical vandalism. The author's sincerity, earnestness, and vast learning are very patent all through the book, but these in themselves do not give one a right to disturb the world with the fulminations born of one's intellectual disquiet unless one has a plan of leading the readers to some constructive thought through all this account of the travails of one's mental life. Sadhu Santinath has no such plan, his position being that it is better to be an inveterate agnostic than to be an adherent of any logically defective doctrine.

We have also a few remarks to offer on the author's agnostic attitude. Agnosticism, like every other attitude towards the ultimate nature of things, must necessarily express itself in conduct if, of course, a person is sincere in regard to his convictions. We can think of three possible forms of conduct in honest agnostics. Defeated in arriving at metaphysical certainty, the first type may try to make the best use of the present life and turn into hedonists pursuing their own worldly interests, of which alone they feel any certainty. The second type consists of those who are endowed with an altruistic nature. From metaphysics they turn their attention to the service of country or humanity, evidently because of their strong faith in man's social destiny. Now in both these types there is, no doubt, an absence of certainty regarding the ultimate nature of things, but they are unanimous in having some convictions regarding this life and its possibilities. They cannot therefore be regarded as full-fledged agnostics. That epithet is applicable only to the third type that has no convictions regarding anything, either about the ultimate nature of things, or about themselves, the world and society in which they find themselves placed. Such men will find life purposeless and unintelligible, and if they are really earnest in their intellectual attitude, they will seek immediate relief in suicide rather than wait for the 'inevitable hour' and allow themselves to be caught up indefinitely in this vain, dreary, painful show.

Now Sadhu Santinath cannot be classified into any of these groups. His previous

career assures us that he has no charm for the lower life. And as far as we know, he has not yet turned into an active philanthropist, nor has he committed suicide. Until he follows one of these alternatives we cannot be convinced of his agnosticism. In fact deliberate suicide is the only conduct that we can expect of an earnest truth-seeker and acute logician like the Sadhuji, if he has *really* become an inveterate agnostic as he claims himself to be. Until he has done it his agnosticism is as unconvincing as the theories he has taken so much pains to refute. We, for our part, cannot take him to be an agnostic at all. He is yet a truth-seeker, temporarily caught up in a morass in the spiritual path, from which his own earnestness is ultimately bound to rescue him. But the tragedy of the situation is that he does not recognise this, and has thought it fit to place before the world the present book, offering it as his final conclusion, whereas it is really but an abortive product of his mental life.

Another factor that is responsible for the author's peculiar attitude is his feeling that he has experienced Samadhi. This, we should point out, is an illusion of his mind. We are led to this conclusion by the facts that the author himself gives about his Samadhi experience. He says that Samadhi intuition gave him conviction about the ultimate Reality for some length of time, but afterwards the study of philosophical books led him to doubt its validity. Now this is counter to all accepted notions regarding the effect of Samadhi on the mind of man. The conviction that an immediate experience leaves on the mind cannot be removed by anything other than a higher form of immediate experience. Thus no amount of intellectual proof can disabuse the mind of the sense of reality we have for the outer world, and that is why even Sadhu Santinath, in spite of his logical acumen and merciless spirit of criticism, speaks in season and out of season of 'extramental and independent object', 'object existing outside independently of the thinking mind', of 'psychological reality' as distinguished from 'metaphysical reality', etc. For in the last analysis such concepts are quite unintelligible to critical intelligence

except in so far as impressions that our mind cannot disabuse itself of in any way. Now the general notion about Samadhi is that it is a form of direct experience, far superior even to sense perception in its convincingness. The truth it reveals is so indubitable that no logical process can erase the conviction it leaves on the mind. A higher form of Samadhi intuition may sublate a lower form of it, but never mere logic chopping as in the case of Sadhuji. So the only conclusion we arrive at regarding Sadhu Santinath's Samadhi intuitions is that they were no Samadhi intuitions at all.

Before we leave this topic, we may also draw attention to the Sadhuji's contention that Samadhi experience is connected entirely with ideas that are subjective, internal and personal, and that it can give no knowledge having objective validity. To make such an absolute distinction is in the last resort unwarranted, but even taking it for granted, the Sadhuji's contention goes against the latest scientific evidence. Dr. Rhyn's recent book on 'Extra-sensory Perception' has proved the facts of clairvoyance and thought-reading in the right orthodox scientific style. In both these types of experience the receiving mind falls into a state of abstraction, and comes to know facts outside without the aid of the sense organs or the inferential process, thus showing that the mind of man has some super-normal ways of knowing, and that these generally manifest themselves in a state of mental abstraction akin to Samadhi. This is a very important conclusion. For if it is once admitted, the possibility of gaining direct knowledge of even higher aspects of Reality in similar states of mind cannot be denied.

It has also to be noted that the state of Samadhi or trance is not to be equated with intuition. Samadhi is only a condition of the mental mechanism in which the higher powers of the mind will become operative, *in case it has undergone the necessary preparation*. We draw attention to this fact because it is possible to practise what we would call a merely mechanical form of Samadhi wherein all thought-waves are suspended, and yet no illumination is gained. Illumination will depend on the purity of mind attained previously through

perfect dispassion, keen discrimination and intense aspiration. A mere mechanical stilling of the mind, when devoid of this qualification, will not give the mind the receptivity required for intuiting the highest truth. We draw the author's pointed attention to this, because he seems to contend that if Samadhi reveals the truth, purity of mind need not be considered a necessary condition of it.

Our suspicion in this regard is further strengthened on reading the author's description of Samadhi from his own personal experience of it. He describes the highest Samadhi as merely a state in which objective experience, joy, calmness of beatitude and everything else lapses—and 'nothing more and nothing less' than that. Elsewhere he also says that the only difference between deep sleep and Samadhi is that after the latter an extraordinary calmness and tranquillity of mind are felt, which, according to him, are due to the long course of conscious and voluntary struggle for suppressing the distractions of the mind. But all who have experienced Samadhi maintain that in true experience of that state, consciousness does not shrink but attain to its maximum intensity beyond the polarities of subject and object. It is, above all, a state of illumination and enlightenment. Note also the grand description of it in the Mandukopaniṣad: "The Fourth, they say, is not inwardly cognitive, nor outwardly cognitive, nor cognitive both wise. It is not an indefinite mass of cognition, nor collective cognition, nor non-cognition. It is unseen, unrelated, inconceivable, uninferable, unimaginable, indescribable—to be traced only as the essence of the one Self experienced in all states of consciousness. All phenomena cease in it. It is peace, it is bliss, it is non-duality."

What we are led to conclude from this is that the author's so-called experience of Samadhi is only a self-induced state of mental blankness. It is ineffective because it is unaccompanied by all the preparation necessary for endowing the mind with the required receptivity for the highest experience.

Our impression in this respect is still more confirmed on noting that the after-

effect of this Samadhi on the author was a severe pain in the head. But those who can speak with authority on Samadhi maintain that one who had experience of Samadhi never suffers from any pain in the head—not even a headache—whatever other ailment his body may be suffering from. This is in striking contrast with the author's experience. The only conclusion we are led to arrive at from this difference is this: Without going through all the intermediary steps, the author must have practised higher forms of meditation unsuited to his spiritual and physical condition and reached a state of mental blankness accompanied by bad physiological effects in the brain. This unfortunate circumstance, we fear, has much to do with the author's distrust of Samadhi and that hyper-critical attitude, of which the pre-

sent book is the product. He has staked much for pursuing the call of the spirit, and he has perhaps some excuse for his present distrust of Samadhi and of every philosophical system. But he has to recognise his own mistakes and illusions if he is to extricate himself from this spiritual morass in which he finds himself at present. Our desire to impress this point on the author is our excuse in writing this rather unusual type of review—unusual because it reviews the author more than his book. We hope that so earnest an aspirant like the Sadhuji will, in course of time, get over his present outlook, gain illumination in place of mental blankness and cerebral complications, and then come forward with a book conveying a gospel more positive than his present work of philosophical vandalism.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday Celebration

Madras: The 104th birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at Madras on the 26th of February. In the morning Bhajana was conducted in the Math premises and poor people were fed later at the Ramakrishna Students' Home. In the afternoon, Mr. Murthi Rao Bhagavathar of Saidapet performed a Harikatha on 'Ramadas Charitram'.

A public meeting was held in the evening with Mr. T. R. Venkatrama Sastriar in the chair. Rao Bahadur K. V. Rangaswami Iyengar and Mr. V. Venkatarajulu Reddiar spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

Mr. Venkatarajulu Reddiar stated that Sri Ramakrishna was a great Vaishnavite Bhakta, and compared the sayings of this great saint with the teachings of Nammalwar and other saints of South India to show how those religious leaders had laid stress on the importance of Bhakti Marga for the liberation of the soul.

Mr. K. V. Rangaswami Iyengar said that the world was now passing through a trying time, and this trouble with the world was something far more serious than they were apt to think. It went to the

very root of human nature. The remedy offered by political and economic reformers to solve it was not enough. The real remedy lay in building the mansion of humanity anew and in moulding human nature on the basis of the old spiritual foundation on which it was built and which they had now lost sight of. If they studied history carefully, he said, they would find that it was religion that had saved the nations of the world and not mere material prosperity. The life of Jesus Christ illustrated this idea and the life of Sri Ramakrishna in later years went to show that one's life would not be happy if it was not built on spiritual foundation.

After comparing the teachings of Jesus Christ and Sri Ramakrishna, the lecturer said that Christianity would not be intelligible without the background of Jewish culture. Sri Ramakrishna's teachings were not new but only reminded people of the fundamental principles of Hinduism. In simple language, Sri Ramakrishna taught the world the sublime ideal of toleration of all faiths—an ideal which was the glory of Hinduism. Hinduism was not a proselytising religion, because, according to Hindu conception, all were Hindus. There was no question of conversion to Hindu-

ism as was the case with Christianity or Islam. This great principle of Hinduism Sri Ramakrishna not only taught but also practised.

Proceeding, the lecturer said that Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated in his life that religion was not a mere question of dogma and belief or only an intellectual exercise, but that it was essentially a matter of experience and faith. It had to be experienced by each individual according to his light. The disciples of Sri Ramakrishna were carrying out his teachings by doing humanitarian work. They had proved that it was not correct to say that Hinduism had a paralysing effect on individuals. The unity of Jeevatman and Paramatman, preached by Sri Ramakrishna, was being demonstrated by the members of the Ramakrishna Mission. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa had shown that without piety and sincere conviction, none could reach the feet of the Lord. He had also shown that alleviation of suffering was a work of piety.

The message of Sri Ramakrishna to the world, the lecturer said, was that to realise the truth of the principles of equality and fraternity, one need not go to shifting sands of politics and that those ideals could be attained by following one's religion in a spirit of toleration and reverence. What was wanted at the present day was the spread of this message of Hinduism, expounded by Sri Ramakrishna.

Mr. Venkatarama Sastriar said that Sri Ramakrishna represented the highest religious experience that could be reached by a Hindu. He had shown that a life of service was not foreign to Hinduism. This message was now being carried into practice by the Mission founded in his name. It was the duty of all to see that this Mission carried that message not only to every part of this country, but also throughout the world.

Swami Avinashananda proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the lecturers and the chairman.

With the distribution of Prasadam the celebration came to a close.

Hardwar: The birthday was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal (Hardwar) with great enthu-

siasm for six days. On the 21st of February the function began with Tithi Puja, Sri Sri Chandi Path, Homam, Arati and Bhajan and was followed by Srimad Bhagavat Path, music by local musicians, Ramnam Sankirtan and Sadhuseva on which occasion copies of a Hindi booklet on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Dev were distributed among the Sadhus.

On the 26th of February a meeting was held at 4-30 p.m. under the presidency of Sri Mangal Girjee Maharaj, Mandaleshiwar. S. H. D. Bahuguna, M.A., member of the Municipal Board, addressing the audience showed how even in his childhood Sri Ramakrishna, although belonging to an orthodox Brahmin family, could keep himself above caste distinction and said that the same ideal of his was inspiring the Ramakrishna Mission even now. Swami Muktananda referred to his visit to U.S.A. where he had seen the Vedanta Societies run by the Swamies of the Mission and said that it was the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna that was inspiring them to do philanthropic work in India and preach Vedanta in America. He exhorted all young men, especially of U.P. and the Punjab, to imbibe the spirit and take part in the activities of the Mission. Pandit Liladhar Shastri, Head-master of Rishikul Brahmacharya Vidyalaya, spoke eloquently on the life of Sri Ramakrishna and said that his advent was for the revival of the Sanatan Dharma and showed how since his arrival it was being preached and accepted in many places even outside India. Swami Devananda spoke on various activities of the Ramakrishna Mission in general and Kankhal Sevashram in particular, and said that immense public service was being rendered by the Mission and it was the duty of the public to show their active sympathy to the Mission. Pandit Haribansu Shastri of Sindhi Pathshala, Brahmachari Darshananda of Chaitandeva Kutiya and S. Kishorilal Bajpayee of the Municipal H. E. School also spoke on the life of Sri Ramakrishna and his teachings, which, he said, conformed to the Shastras and were a source of inspiration to all classes of people in all countries.

The meeting which terminated late in the evening was attended by many Sadhus and gentlemen of the locality.

Shyamatal: The Vivekananda Ashrama situated in the Himalayas at an elevation of 4,000 feet above the sea level, celebrated the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna on the 26th of February. Besides devotional music, chanting of scriptures and discourses on holy themes, there was also the feeling of several hundreds of poor hill people on the occasion. In the evening there was a well-attended meeting presided over by Swami Lokeshanandaji, and thoughtful speeches were delivered by Swami Apurvanandaji and Pandit H. R. Dhasmana. Throughout the night there was a programme of devotional music.

Singapore: The celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birth-day began with worship, prayer and the recitation of devotional songs by the students of the Mission schools. Afterwards the feeding of the children numbering over two hundred took place.

The most important item of the day was in the evening when several instructive and inspiring lectures were delivered at the Mission Hall explaining the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

Brahmachari Kailasam spoke eloquently in Tamil on the "Message of Sri Ramakrishna" which was followed by a speech in English by Sodarar Ponudoray.

Swami Bhaswarananda who presided spoke next on the 'Human Aspect of the Life Divine' and explained in simple English how Sri Ramakrishna, who was himself an "Avatar" (an incarnation of God), showed to the world in a practical manner that Divine realisation was possible through meditation and devotion. Though a Divine Being himself, Sri Ramakrishna (the Swamiji said), did not lose the human aspect; but on the contrary, he lived a simple life dedicated to the service of humanity.

The function concluded with a lecture in Tamil by Brahmachari Kailasam who described at length the life history of Sri Ramakrishna with the aid of coloured slides which the large audience, especially the children, thoroughly enjoyed.

A great part of his speech was devoted to the work done by Swami Vivekananda, the foremost disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. It was Swami Vivekananda, he said, who

spread the message of his Master throughout the whole world and popularised the Ramakrishna Movement in America, Europe and other countries. It was he who in particular opened the eyes of the western people to a realisation of the greatness of Indian Philosophy and Hinduism.

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Branch Centre at Lahore

At the request of some local devotees interested in the ideals and activities of the Mission, the Governing Body of the Mission decided to open a Branch at Lahore at the beginning of the year, and deputed Swami Adyananda for the purpose.

The formal opening of the Centre took place on the 21st February 1939—the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna. There was Puja, Homa and Path (chanting of the scripture) at the rented house at No. 3-A, Lodge Road, where the Mission is located at present. In the evening a public meeting was held at the Sanathan Dharam College Hall. The Hon'ble Justice Mr. M. V. Bhide presided. There was a good gathering and prominent ladies and gentlemen attended. Swami Adyananda, Sir Gokul Chand Narang, Prof. S. N. Das Gupta, Principal T. N. Maulick, Dr. T. N. Sita Ram, Prof. Hiralal Chopra and Prof. Teja Singh addressed the meeting on the ideas, ideals and activities of the Missions in the different parts of the world.

Sir Gokul Chand Narang said, "Sri Ramakrishna was a great personality and a great force." He admired the great Guru and his disciple Swami Vivekananda. They have raised India and her prestige outside. After describing his personal reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda whom he had the privilege of meeting at Lahore, Sir Gokul Chand, concluded with the remarks that the presence of some Sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Mission at Lahore, will not only inculcate high spiritual ideals and strong character in the people but also inspire them to disinterested service. The Speaker had no doubt that the necessary co-operation will be forthcoming for such a good cause.

Prof. S. N. Das Gupta described the philanthropic activities of the Mission during flood, famine and other calamities. Swami Adyananda described in brief

the life of Sri Ramakrishna and his spiritual experiences. He also spoke on the objects of the Mission and its gradual expansion in the different parts of the world and its present activities for moral and spiritual, intellectual and physical betterment of humanity.

The other speakers also dwelt on the different aspects of the ideals and activities of the Mission. The Hon'ble Justice Mr. Bhide remarked at the conclusion that it was a privilege for him to preside on the occasion. He hoped the people of the Punjab would draw their inspiration from the life and teachings of the Great Masters and co-operate with the Swamis in establishing the Mission Centre opened at Lahore.

Since the opening of the Centre, Swami Adyananda has begun his weekly religious classes at the Mission premises. Other activities will be gradually undertaken.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay:

Report for the years 1931-1937

The report under review is a brilliant record of services which the Institution rendered to the public of Bombay, through its multifarious humanitarian activities, missionary, educational and charitable.

Missionary: Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission popularised the principles of the universal religion of Vedānta by holding classes and delivering lectures in the city of Bombay and its suburbs as well as in the different parts of the Province and occasionally outside the Province. 525 weekly religious classes and discourses were held in and around the city of Bombay. Through private interviews Swamis promoted the spiritual welfare of earnest seekers of truth. By organising birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda when well-attended

public meetings are held to discuss the life and teachings of these two spiritual luminaries of Modern India, the institution is bringing the public in touch with the revitalizing doctrines of Hinduism for which the Mission stands.

Educational: Activities under this head comprise conducting a Students' Home, organising exhibitions of Arts and Industries and management of a free Reading Room and Library. This is being utilized by an ever-increasing number of interested readers.

Charitable and other Humanitarian Activities: To alleviate the sufferings of the poor the Ashrama is maintaining an outdoor charitable dispensary which is being attended by a large number of patients of all classes and communities, creeds and colour. It may be recalled that no less than 93,440 patients took advantage of its medical help during the years under review. Both homoeopathic and allopathic ways of treatment are followed.

The Ashrama undertook relief operations in the district of Ratnagiri and spent Rs. 858-13-9 for the purpose. It spent Rs. 2867-12-0 for relief work at Dacca and other places and Rs. 2500 for Bhil Seva Mandal at Panch Mahals and rendered financial help during Behar earthquake relief and flood relief at Nowgong, Assam.

The management proposes to expand its scope of activities to make it more serviceable to the people of Western India, should necessary monetary help be forthcoming in an adequate measure. The contemplated scheme of placing the Students' Home on a wider basis requires Rs. 50,000 for land acquisition and construction work. The philanthropic public is requested to contribute liberally to make this highly commendable educational effort a success.

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